

DERWARD WILLAM DEERE

THE TWELVE SPEAK

vol. 1



**a new translation
of the minor
prophets:**

obadiah joel jonah amos hosea micah

THE TWELVE SPEAK

(Volume I)

A New Translation of the Minor Prophets

by Dr. DERWARD W. DEERE

THE TWELVE SPEAK is the first book in a two-volume translation of the minor prophets of the Old Testament — the "pioneers of Christianity." Included are the prophets Obadiah, Joel, Jonah, Amos, Hosea, and Micah. The words of these spokesmen have been lamentably neglected by many modern Christians because their Hebrew language and style are of a time long past. In this modern, readable English translation, these prophets are enabled to speak their timeless message directly to our day and generation.

Dr. Derward W. Deere, recognized as one of the most distinguished teachers and interpreters of the Old Testament in America today, has kept in mind the needs of both the layman and the serious student of religion. Historical, exegetical, and interpretative footnotes accompany each page of the translations, and add richness to the prophets' words. Chapter headings and a suggestive outline within the Scriptures themselves have also been provided. To set the stage for the prophetic messages, a helpful prologue discusses the name, mission, and message of each of these Old Testament prophets as they play their part in the divine economy of God, in His redemptive program of the ages.

The seminary or college student, the music- or religious-education worker, the Christian young person or adult of every denomination, will be profoundly instructed and inspired by this scholarly, concise, and interpretative new translation. Above all, the reader will derive a new sense of the pertinence of the pre-exilic prophets — a pertinence that rests upon the unchangeable nature of sin and the eternal goodness of the Lord God.



About the Author

Dr. Derward W. Deere is Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. A native of the state of Arkansas, he is a graduate of Ouchita Baptist College, receiving the A.B. degree in 1942, and of the Arkadelphia Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, receiving the Th. M. degree in 1945 and the Th. D. degree in 1948. He was a fellow in the Department of Old Testament Interpretation, 1945-1948, and served on the teaching staff of the latter institution, 1948-1950. He came to the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary in May, 1950.

He was Visiting Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville during the academic year 1944-1945. He has also served as pastor of various churches in Arkansas, Kentucky, and California.

Dr. Deere is the translator of the books of Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Jeremiah and Psalms 116-134 for the Berkeley version of the Old Testament. He is a member of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis, the National Association of Biblical Instructors, and the American Schools of Oriental Research.

ABOUT THIS BOOK



Dr. Derward W. Deere has been recognized for some time as a competent student of the Old Testament. His scholarship is attested by his classmates and his fellow teachers in Golden Gate Baptist Seminary. His use of the Hebrew language is indicative of his ability. For students who approach the New Testament, there are valuable translations, several of which have been done by individuals — Moffat, Goodspeed, Weymouth, and Montgomery, to mention a few. Not many have dared to make independent ventures of translation in the Old Testament. After the Revised Standard Version, it is heartening to have a competent scholar offer his own independent translation. Dr. Deere is a Southern Baptist, and Southern Baptists believe in the Old Testament. The high ethical and spiritual values of the prophets fit into their concept of contemporary need.

Dr. Deere's annotated translation will prove valuable to students and will provide some sense of direction to writers of commentaries. I, for one, hope that Dr. Deere will give us a commentary on the minor prophets.

—DR. LEE GALLMAN
*Director, Seminary Extension Department
Southern Baptist Seminaries
Jackson, Mississippi*

Professor Deere has done a real service to theological students in preparing a very readable analysis of the minor prophets. All Bible students will find in his work a non-complicated treatment of the often difficult text. In it a well-sensed need has been met.

—DR. WILLIAM H. ROSSELL
*Professor of Old Testament
Seminary Hill, Fort Worth, Texas*

This is an excellent translation of the first six books of the minor prophets. By the use of numerous footnotes Dr. Deere has given much clarification and interpretation to these passages of Scripture. The introduction to prophesy in the first part of the book is also very helpful.

We will certainly include this book on our list of selected readings for our courses here.

—DR. RALPH L. SMITH
*Professor of Old Testament
Seminary Hill, Fort Worth, Texas*



THE TWELVE SPEAK

(Volume I)

THE TWELVE SPEAK

(VOLUME I)

*A translation of the Books of
OBADIAH, JOEL, JONAH, AMOS,
HOSEA and MICAH
with exegetical and interpretative
footnotes and an introductory
section on Prophecy*

by

DERWARD WILLIAM DEERE

*Professor of Old Testament Interpretation
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Berkeley, California*

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*to
my students, through whom the greatest
of all prophets, the Lord Jesus Christ,
lives again*

THE TWELVE SPEAK
(Volume I)

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PREFACE

God's moral principles are as unchanging as the physical laws that give order to our universe. He has used many spokesmen to make these principles known and understood. The Old Testament prophets stand high in the procession of those who have been used to interpret God's will to men. The message of these spokesmen has been lost to many because their language and style did not catch the attention of modern men. Serious students, knowing the powerful message of the prophets, have sought to relate their utterances to our day.

Among these Old Testament scholars is Professor Derward W. Deere of the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary. His love for the prophets came early in his studies and has grown through the years of his teaching. For him, these men came alive and he has made them live for his students.

We are grateful that at last the fruit of his labors can be made available to a wider circle of Bible-lovers. The message of the prophets is shown to be relevant to the twentieth century in these pages. God grant that the truth they proclaim may give to men of our time the moral courage needed for this hour.

—HAROLD K. GRAVES

*President, Golden Gate Baptist
Theological Seminary
Berkeley, California*

FOREWORD

This volume grew out of a request from my students to provide them with a guide in our interpretative study of the prophets. Later the impression came to the author to share these materials with mortals everywhere—clergy and laity alike. As a translator I do not claim infallibility. I have a profound respect and appreciation for all of the versions and translations of the Scriptures. My one aim and ever-consuming desire has been to bring the message of *The Twelve*, through the framework of the Hebrew Scriptures, into modern, readable and discernible language.

The Old Testament prophets are the pioneers of modern Christianity. Their message is timeless—as modern as a morning newspaper. As a prelude to the message of *The Twelve*, I seek to portray the significance of the *name*, *mission* and *message* of the prophets as they fit into the Divine Economy of God.

With the Apostle Paul I can truly say, “I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians” (Romans 1:14, KJV). I am a part of all I have met; my indebtedness is unlimited. But I desire to recognize a unique indebtedness to Dr. Clyde T. Francisco and Dr. J. J. Owens, of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky; Dr. J. Leo Green, of the Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, North Carolina; President Harold K. Graves and Dr. Kyle M. Yates, Jr., of the Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, Berkeley, California; and Dr. Joseph T. McClain, of Ouachita College, Arkadelphia, Arkansas.

Quotations from different authors are properly documented as the various publishers have so requested. All quotations from the Old Testament are of the author's own

translation. Quotations from the New Testament are so recognized within the documentation.

The sharing of these materials has been an enriching experience. They go forth from the pen, mind and heart of the author with a prayer and hope that the Eternal may deem it wise in His wisdom to use them in the universal sweep of His mighty redemptive program for mankind.

—D. W. D.

**THE PLACE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET
IN THE DIVINE ECONOMY OF GOD**

Introduction

I. The Definition and Designation of the Prophet

1. THE PROPHET CALLED "MAN OF GOD"
2. THE PROPHET CALLED "SERVANT OF GOD"
3. THE PROPHET CALLED "MESSENGER OF YAHWEH"
4. THE PROPHET CALLED "INTERPRETER"
5. THE PROPHET CALLED "SEER"
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7. THE PROPHET CALLED "PROPHET"

II. The Mission of the Prophet

1. INTERPRETER OF YAHWEH'S MESSAGE AND WILL
2. TESTER OF PEOPLE'S MOTIVES
3. REPROVER OF KINGS, ETC.

III. The Message of the Prophet

1. JUDGMENT: BASED UPON YAHWEH'S HOLINESS
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3. FAITH: OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK OF THE FUTURE

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

Prophecy is the supreme gift of the nation Israel to the world. It is the most remarkable fact not only in Hebrew history, but in the moral and spiritual development of the human race down to the coming of Jesus Christ. As John Skinner in his classic book, *Prophecy and Religion*, observes: "It [Old Testament prophecy] is a phenomenon to which the history of religion affords no real parallel,"¹ exceeding all other literature of the soul. Hebrew prophecy has its roots and antecedents in widely diffused primitive ideas and customs uniquely prevalent among peoples in the early stages of civilization. "Other peoples have had their great religious teachers: The Hindus their Buddha, the Persians their Zoroaster and the Arabians their Mohammed."² But the prophets occupy a unique place in religious history. Nowhere has there been a comparable group of such creative personalities, vital yet vastly different individuals, exerting such far-reaching influence.³

1. John Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion* (Cambridge: At The University Press, 1948), p. 1. 2. Albert C. Knudson, *The Beacon Light of Prophecy* (New York: The Methodist Press, 1914), p. 1. 3. Cf. John Patterson, *The Goodly Fellowship of the Prophets* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), pp. 1-3.

It is the conviction of the prophets and writers of Israel that the line of prophetic teachers has been uninterrupted since the days of Moses.¹ Yahweh exclaims in Jeremiah 7:25: "From the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day, I have repeatedly sent you all my servants the prophets, daily rising up early and sending them." Also the representation in the book of Amos is similar: ". . . I brought you up from the land of Egypt and led you in the wilderness forty years . . . I raised up some of your sons to be prophets. . . ." ² When the author speaks of prophecy, he refers mainly to that institution founded by Samuel (c. 1050 B.C.), existing sporadically in individual members long before his time. In his day there definitely was a prophetic guild called "sons of the prophets," or "company of the prophets." ³ Representative settlements were at Ramoth, Naioth, Bethel, Jericho and Gilgal. Uniquely enough, Samuel has been called the *first seminary president*.

1. Only four women in the Old Testament were endowed with the title *prophetess*: Miriam (Exodus 15:20), Deborah (Judges 6:4), Huldah (II Kings 22:14) and Noadiah (Nehemiah 6:14). Cf. also Jeremiah 15:1; Hosea 12:10. The Prophet Jeremiah brings Moses and Samuel together. 2. Amos 2:10, 11; the Nazarites were a class dating very far back, for in the time of Judges, examples are found in Samson and Samuel. 3. Cf. Acts 3:24, Revised Standard Version of the Holy Bible (Copyright 1946 and 1952: The National Council of Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.; publisher: Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York); G. Harold Lancaster, *Old Testament Studies* (New York: Marshall Brothers, Ltd.), pp. 101-104.

To the prophets, more than to any other group of men, the world is indebted for its richest and noblest spiritual treasure. Hence the question arises: How did the Old Testament prophet fit into God's Divine Economy? The author proposes to answer that question by examining the Name, Mission and Message of the Prophets.

I. The Definitions and Designations of the Prophet

1. The vaguest and most external name in the Old Testament for the prophet is "man of God"—"a man of God," (אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים)¹ or "the man of God" (אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים).² This is the usual name for a prophet in the early days of Israelite history—used of Moses, Samuel and King David. Especially is it the standing designation of the two great early prophets of the Northern Kingdom, Elijah (c. 870-850 B.C.) and Elisha (c. 850-800 B.C.).

Generally speaking, the prophet was looked upon as being more closely related to God than other men. The term also suggests the *moral character* of the prophet and the *ethical nature* of all prophecy. The woman of Shunem with whom Elisha lived, whose son fell sick and died, calls the prophet a "holy man of God" (אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים קָדוֹשׁ)³, suggesting that the

1. I Samuel 9:6. 2. I Kings 12:22; 17:18. 3. II Kings 4:9; cf. I Kings 17:18f.; cf. the apostle Peter merely echoes his words, ". . . holy men spake from God, moved by the Holy Spirit." II Peter 1:21, Authorized King James Version of the Holy Bible (Oxford: At the University Press, 1611 A.D.).

Old Testament prophet was the first citizen in his own day and generation—"he was first among equals."

2. Again the prophets are called "servants of Yahweh," (עבדי יהוה) a very common appellation. The expression, "servant of Yahweh," always implies public service, man of affairs and movements, executing the designs, interests and purposes of the Eternal. Often the prophets would be in the vanguard of the moral, social, political and spiritual reforms of their day. This title is frequently applied to Moses, the Founder of the Theocracy, the great Law-Giver of Israel. This designation emphasized the humility of the prophets. They were "laborers together under God."¹

3. Once more, the prophet is called "messenger of Yahweh" (מלאך יהוה) or "angel of Yahweh." "Who is blind, but My servant? Or deaf, as My messenger? (כמלאכי) whom I am sending . . . ?"² "Observe, I will send My messenger (מלאכי), and He shall prepare the way before Me . . ."³ This name designates the *kind of service* in which the prophet is

1. The suggested translation of I Corinthians 3:9 by the late Dr. W. H. Davis, James Buchanan Harrison Professor of New Testament Interpretation, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. 2. Isaiah 42:19. 3. Malachi 3:1.

engaged: Receiving messages from Yahweh. Also the word "messenger" (מלאך) expresses what is exclusively conspicuous in the prophets, namely, *the sense of authority with which they spoke*. Their entire personality was charged and surcharged with a prophetic glow, as they delivered a vital message from a true and living God—"Thus says Yahweh."

4. The prophet is also called "interpreter" (מליץ) "your first father sinned, and your interpreters (מליצך) transgressed against Me."¹ The prophets were Israel's interpreters—*men who interpreted God's truth, ways and precepts to men*. This name is exceedingly descriptive of *the whole attitude* of the prophet. The history of Israel and the surrounding nations reflected itself in the prophet's mind as in a mirror, and through him the nation read the meaning of the Eternal's movements. The souls of these men were extremely sensitive as Raymond Calkins notes: "The prophet's mind is the seismograph of Providence, vibrating the first faint tremors that herald the coming earthquake."² Also, as truth reflected itself in the prophet's mind, it awoke in his prophetic soul

1. Isaiah 43:27, מליץ > לויץ or לויץ: "to act as interpreter," "to interpret."
2. Raymond Calkins, *Jeremiah the Prophet* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p. 47.

a sense of his people's sin and imperfection, challenging him to speak to their conscience and awaken their apathetic spiritual and moral sensitivity.

5. Again, the two Hebrew words translated "seer" (¹רֹאֶה and ²חֹזֶה) are two of the oldest terms for the prophet. The emphasis is on the way the prophet received his message.³ The verb רֹאֶה is a common verb meaning "to see," but the more elevated term, חֹזֶה, supplanted it for prophetic insight. As Brown-Driver-Briggs⁴ suggest, חֹזֶה means "to see intuitively," or "to see under the exterior," suggesting the capacity for "seeing" higher than the ordinary man. Hence a חֹזֶה "seer" possessed insight and spiritual discernment. The state of abstraction or rapture into which the "seer" fell was common in the East in early times and in other parts of the world.⁵ It was accompanied by profound mental activity. The person in that state was in a vision, or in the spirit—"a man of the spirit" (אִישׁ הָרוּעַ). The truth which then

1. I Samuel 19; cf. II Chronicles 16:7; Isaiah 30:10. 2. Cf. II Samuel 24. Cf. I Chronicles 25:5; II Chronicles 19:2; 33:18f.; Amos 7:12; Isaiah 29:10; Micah 3:7. 3. Mostly by divination. Not always confined to divine things or crises in religious life. It might be rarely used in matters of domestic interest. Cf. Saul looking for his father's asses in I Samuel 9. 4. Brown-Driver-Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, First Edition in 1907; Corrected Impression, 1952), p. 302. 5. Dervishes from Asia Minor and Thrace.

dawned upon his mind was called a "vision" (חזון): "The vision (חזון) which Isaiah the son of Amoz saw (חזה) . . ." ¹

The historical order is no doubt נביא, חזה, and ראה. Samuel was frequently called a ראה.² This term (ראה) gradually went out of use and the term חזה came to the forefront³ and was used as late as the prophets Amos,⁴ Isaiah⁵ and Micah.⁶ Probably the phraseology (חזון) continued to be used in regard to the prophets and their utterances when no ecstatic vision preceded their spoken oracles; but the later prophet's words were no mere sound. They glowed and burned with the presence of God. The Old Testament prophet was divinely equipped to project the principles of God's moral order into the future and perceive that the individual or nation which goes contrary to the will of the Eternal is headed for the junk heap of forgetfulness!

1. Isaiah 1:1. 2. Cf. I Samuel 9:19. 3. Cf. II Samuel 24:11; I Chronicles 25:5; II Chronicles 19:2; 33:18, 19. 4. Cf. his clash Amaziah the priest of King Jereboam II at Bethel: "Be gone O seer (חזה) . . ." in Amos 7:12. 5. Cf. Isaiah 29:10; 30:10: "that say to the seers (החזים) see not. . . ." 6. Cf. Micah 3:7: the seers (החזים) are used with the prophets (נביאים) and diviners (קסמים).

6. Two other kindred names to the word "seer," are **צִפָּה**, "spyer" or "sentinel"—man on the outlook—and **שָׁקֵר** "watchman."¹ These words emphasize not so much the actual mode of reaching truth as *the kind of effort exerted by the prophet*. These two words suggest voluntary effort; the previous two describe an involuntary state. The word **צִפָּה** belongs to a rather late usage, and is appropriated from the practice of setting a "sentinel" or "watchman" on a tower to spy out and sound an alarm of the first distant sign of danger for help. The prophet Habakkuk was in the prophetic mood when he said: "I will take my stand on my post and station myself on the tower, and I will look forth ('watch': **וְאֶצְפֶּה**) to see what He will say to me. . . ." ² Thus the **צִפָּה** (spyer) is "outlook" and **חֹזֶה** (see-er) "insight." As Gettys states: "The Old Testament prophets are Yahweh's watchmen over men and over nations."³

7. The other name emphasizing the Eternal's mode of communicating with man is the word "prophet," (**נְבִיא**), which is used 312 times in the Old Testament. The most outstanding thing about the prophets throughout their checkered history was their habit of addressing men. Naturally what impressed people most about them was their

1. Isaiah 21:6. Cf. Ezekiel 3:16-21; 33:3-11. 2. Habakkuk 2:1. 3. Joseph M. Gettys, *Hark to the Trumpet* (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1948), p. 9.

public speech. Accordingly, this appears to have supplied the most common term of all, namely, נביא,¹ "prophet," one who speaks forth for God.

There is no unanimity of agreement among scholars as to the exact meaning of the word נביא as to both its root and form. In his masterful treatise, *Thesaurus*, Gesenius suggests that the Hebrew root נבא is connected with the Hebrew word, נבע, to "bubble forth" as a fountain, hence, to "pour forth" in the flow of words under excitement of inspiration.² Guillaume makes this identification because the root נבא does imply more than the proclamation of a message.³ But this method of contending that the prophet was one who was excited by inspiration is questioned because of the difficulty involved of so connecting the two root words.

Meek derives the Hebrew word נביא from the root נבוא which does not occur in Hebrew but occurs frequently in Accadian.⁴ נבוא means "to call," or "to call out," or "to

1. Abraham is the first person in the Old Testament to be called a prophet (cf. Genesis 20:7). 2. W. M. Gesenius, *Thesaurus Philologicus Criticus Lingual Hebraeae et Chaldaee Veteris Testament* (Lipsiae: F. C. G. Vogelii, 1840), II, 838 as quoted by Edward J. Young, *My Servants the Prophets* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Erdmans Publishing Company, 1952), p. 56.

3. Alfred Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination Among the Hebrews and Other Semites* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, Ltd., 1938), p. 112. Cf. pp. 107-84 for a thorough discussion of the divination of prophecy. 4. Theophile J. Meek, *Hebrew Origins* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), p. 150ff.—LXX: προφήτης — preposition πρό = "for in behalf of" and verb φημί = "to speak"—hence a נביא is a "Forth Teller," Preacher.

“speak,” and Meek therefore interprets נביא as “a speaker” or “spokesman of God.” His interpretation is supported by R. B. Y. Scott.¹

Albright² refers to the use of the word in the Code of Hammurabi: In the epilogue the phrase “Na-bu-u pale-ia” appears; translated, “who will declare my reign,” or “declared, called of my reign.” Albright views this form (נביא) as a verbal adjective and translates it “called.” He says that the verb נבוא means “to call.” His conclusion is that the correct etymological explanation of נביא is “one who is called (by God), and who has a vocation (from God).”³

Theodore H. Robinson⁴ claims that the name, נביא, indicates ecstatic behavior. Pedersen⁵ contends the word is derived from the “ecstatic inherent cries.”

1. R. B. Y. Scott, *The Relevance of the Prophets* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951), p. 45. 2. Cf. William F. Albright, *From Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1946), pp. 231-33, 332. 3. *Ibid.*, p. 231. 4. Cf. Theodore H. Robinson, *Prophecy and the Prophets in Ancient Israel* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co., 1953, Second Edition, 1950), pp. 28-38. Cf. II Kings 18. 5. Johannes Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), III-IV, 111.

Other scholars attempt to trace the meaning of the word נבִיא from a cognate root found in the Assyrian-Babylonian and Arabic languages: *Naba'a*. In the former it means "to speak," "to talk," "to proclaim," "to utter"¹ and appears in such divine appellations as Nebo, Nabu, Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar, etc. But in the Arabic language the root infers more than a mere utterance—the proclamation of a message which the speaker is commissioned to deliver. He is "a commissioned speaker"—a delegated spokesman.²

1. Hence the substantive: "announcement," or designation, is derived.
2. Cf. W. J. Farley, *The Progress of Old Testament Prophecy* (New York, Fleming H. Revell Company), pp. 10-11.

König views the word in an active sense and translates it "speaker."¹ He suggests four reasons for this translation. First, he contends that the form "qatil" does not necessarily have a passive meaning. Second, he attempts to show that נביא itself is not passive. Third, in a number of passages in the Scriptures נביא is practically a synonym for "mouth." Fourth, by appealing to other Hebrew nouns whose roots appear in Arabic or Babylonian and now in Hebrew, König concludes that there is no validity in the contention that the Hebrew verb נבא is derived from the noun נביא.

This limited survey reveals that it is impossible to ascertain the precise connotation of the word נביא solely from the standpoint of philology. The root נבא which appears in the Hebrew Scriptures is probably derived from the noun נביא as Brown-Driver-Briggs² suggest. Attempts to derive the word from either a Babylonian, Accadian or an Arabic root, therefore, are inconclusive;³ efforts from this process appear non-successful.

To arrive at the proper meaning of the word, נביא, the

1. Eduard König, *Der Offenbarungsbegriff des Alten Testament* (1882), pp. 71ff., as quoted by Edward J. Young, *op. cit.*, p. 57. 2. Brown-Driver-Briggs, *op. cit.*, pp. 611ff. 3. Cf. Alfred Haldar, *Association of Cults Prophets Among Ancient Semites* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1945), pp. 108ff. Haldar contends the word "prophet" originates from the Assyrian word "nabu."

critic must look elsewhere than philology. When a thorough examination of the actual usage of the word נביא in the Old Testament is made, Cornill's suggestion is probably correct:

The word "prophet" (נביא) in the Old Testament is derived from a root that means "to speak," or better "to speak by delegated authority."¹

This conclusion is supported by a most recent Hebrew lexicon, Köehler,² and demonstrated by two classic examples in the Pentateuch.³ The first one is Exodus 7:1:

Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Look, I make you as God to Pharaoh: and Aaron your brother shall be your prophet (spokesman)." ויאמר יהוה אל-משה ראה נתתיך אלהים לפרעה ואהרן אחיך יהיה נביאך:

The second one is Exodus 4:16:

"... He (Aaron) shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be to you for a mouth and you shall be to him as God." ודבר-הוא לך אל-העם והיה הוא יהיה-לך לפה ואתה תהיה-לו לאלהים:

Hence, a prophet (נביא) is one who speaks for God, one who is God's mouthpiece—God's delegated spokesman!⁴

1. C. H. Cornhill, *The Prophets of Israel* (Translated by Dutton F. Corkran; Chicago: The Open House Company, Third Edition 1897), pp. 9-10.

2. Ludwig Köehler, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1951), X, 586ff.

3. Cf. also Deuteronomy 18:18b; Jeremiah 1:17a; 5:19; Isaiah 30:2; I Kings 8:15; II Samuel 7:5: "One who is God's mouthpiece."

4. Cf. H. H. Rowley, *Prophecy and Religion in Ancient China and Israel* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1956), pp. 4ff.

II. *The Mission of the Prophet*

As "counsel" expressed the function of the "wise man," and "law" that of the priest, so "word" was used to designate the characteristic activity of the prophet. The primary mission of the prophet was to communicate to Israel the divine word.¹ Yahweh spoke through him to His people, as revealed by Amos: "For the Lord Yahweh does not do a thing unless He reveals it to His servants the prophets."² Hence, the mission of the Old Testament prophet was unique.

In the first place, the prophet's mission was to interpret the Eternal's message and purpose to man. This necessitated that they be the conservators, purifiers and interpreters of what they had received.³

Since the Jewish state was the kingdom of God on earth, the prophets were statesmen as well as enlightened, religious men; but this did not make them demagogues! It compelled them often to be, as in the case of Samuel, Elijah, Micah and others, revolutionists; but they were never traitors. It made them occasionally counselors of submission to foreign domination; but they were never unpatriotic or cowardly. Even though they were rigid upholders of the principles of the theocratic law, their position never made them members

1. Albert C. Knudson, *The Prophetic Movement in Israel* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1921), p. 15; cf. Jeremiah 18:18. 2. Amos 3:7.

3. Frederick Carl Eiselen, *Prophecy and the Prophets* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1909), p. 24.

of an unscrupulous hierarchy. They did not form castes like priests; their guild was not a closed shop. A man was a prophet not by birth, but by divine appointment. The "hand of Yahweh" then as now reached out and touched all classes of men. He took Jonah from the flock; Elisha from the plow; Isaiah from the bier; Micah from the country; and Jeremiah from the Temple. By divine call, equipment and training they were what they were. Hence, they were under a holy and sacred obligation to interpret rightly the principles of the Eternal to man. They were painfully conscious of being God's agents, intermediaries between God and His people.

With one exception prophecy is the most remarkable phenomenon in the life of Israel. That one exception is the Decalogue. This simple, bare and abstract embodiment, in ten words, of the whole life of man, both in relation to one another and to God, is the most wonderful thing in the history of the human race. It stands like Sinai with which it is associated—distant, solitary and hid in heaven; the people and the man who gave it to the rest of the world must ever excite the wonder and veneration of men. The Decalogue is the epitome of prophecy as summarized by the greatest of all prophets as he replied to the question, "Which is the greatest of the commandments?" Said Jesus:

The first is, Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all the strength. The second is this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.¹ On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets.²

Since the Decalogue was given from God to man through a prophet (Moses), in its larger sense it is prophecy. The supreme task of the prophets from that day was to interpret

and apply its truths to the lives of individuals, families and nations.³

In the second place, the mission of a prophet was to serve as "moral teacher," "analyzer" of people's motives—or spiritual analyst.⁴ The prophetic teachings presuppose and rest upon two principles and a fact. First, that Yahweh is the one and only God of Israel. Second, Israel's God is a moral and ethical being who demands moral and ethical living on the part of His people; consequently, Israel is under a holy obligation to reflect the nature and character of her God. The prophets fully recognized, as P. T. Forsyth observes, that "one of the greatest moral dangers is a truly pious man with a conventional morality in the midst of a great crisis."⁵ They conceived religion as the life of God

1. Mark 12:29-31; cf. Matthew 22:37-40; Luke 10:27, *The American Revised Version* (Standard Edition) of the Holy Bible (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1901 A.D.); Deuteronomy 6:4ff. (The Shema); Micah 6:8. 2. Matthew 22:40 (ARV). 3. A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1903), pp. 75ff. 4. Cf. Jeremiah 6:27. 5. From P. T. Forsyth: *Prophet For Today* by Robert McAfee Brown, Copyright, 1952, by W. L. Jenkins, The Westminster Press, p. 129. Used by permission.

in the soul of man. They knew that when you institutionalize an idea you kill it. Therefore they did not lay down a system of religious dogma or a code of external rules; they proclaimed great positive, spiritual principles by which men could analyze their actions and on which they could build and govern their lives.

As Dr. W. R. Forrester of Saint Andrew's College recently observed, "When idealism is relegated to the practical, a certain amount of the ethical note is lost."¹ The Old Testament prophets were idealists—*par excellence*. Their ideals stemmed from their fellowship with the Eternal. The prophets felt themselves to be in a very real sense partners with Yahweh in His great work; they expected to hear His voice of inspiration and instruction, and they heard it.² The prophets possessed eyes of faith that could penetrate the veneer of passing cultures and view the things that were eternal. They knew that the Lord God Almighty could never be outdated.

Man in all his wisdom had not outgrown God's everlasting laws of righteousness, truth, justice and love. The prophets, pure in character, strong in intellect, sincere in purpose, quickened through personal communion with God and enlightened by the divine spirit were able to see facts and

1. An oral lecture delivered at San Francisco Theological Seminary, San Anselmo, California, June, 1953. 2. Cf. George Adam Smith, *The Book of The Twelve Prophets, Revised Edition* (Fifth Impression) *The Expositor's Bible* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers), I, 86ff.

understand truths hidden from the eyes of those who did not live in the same fellowship with God. Their work was not to erect political or social machinery to embody their ideals, but to state their ideals, and to arouse and educate the conscience of man as he applied the goals and principles of God in the society of his own day and generation.¹

In the third place, the Old Testament prophets were often reprovers of the moral, political and religious leaders of their day. The prophets were not primarily political thinkers. They were preachers! They did not search after truth; the truth had captured them. They knew that truth was eternal and that truth crushed to the earth would rise again. They did not theorize concerning the nature of the state; on the contrary, they announced the will of God concerning the state. "He was directing, controlling the people and shaping them to His own moral ends."² Hence they had a divine obligation to reprove all men who flouted the purpose of God. This conviction often led them into direct conflict with the priests, prophets and kings.³

The Old Testament prophets were not concerned primarily with what might happen to them. Amos did not ask himself, "What will these rulers do to me?" Nor did

1. Cf. Benard Duhm, *The Twelve Prophets* (Translated by Archibald Duff; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1912), pp. 12-14. 2. Raymond Calkins, *Jeremiah the Prophet—A Study in Personal Religion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1930), p. 42. 3. Cf. Jeremiah 1:18.

Jeremiah say, "I wonder what His Royal Highness ('who tries to excell in cedar'), Jehoiakim, will do to me?"

These were fearless men! They overlooked the prejudices, the fears and the popular ideas of the hour. "Must we shrink from braving danger, exposing falsehood, fighting against wrong?" they inquired. They swam the stream. They spread their sails to the veering wind. The popular leaders of the day looked upon success as the end of living and popularity as the test of truth. Not so the prophets! Their vision pierced beyond the vain shows and the pageantries of life. Kings, priests and nobles were but weak men. That which paraded as public opinion was to them but the shout of the mobs. They believed that God Almighty was the powerful One and He alone was God. They would not deceive for reward or promotion and they would not lie, because they spoke for God. With Abraham Lincoln they agreed that they were not bound to succeed, but they were bound to be true!

Since prophecy instituted the monarchy with Samuel's¹ anointing Saul, prophecy was superior to the kingship. The king was Yahweh's "anointed one"; he was supposed to be the spiritual, moral and political leader of his day. Whenever he deviated from the path of righteousness and holiness, the prophet had a right to rebuke him. Consequently, we have the record of Samuel dethroning Saul;² Nathan rebuking David: "You are the man;"³

1. I Samuel 10. 2. I Samuel 15:24ff. 3. II Samuel 12:7.

Elijah chiding Ahab;¹ Hosea denouncing the house of Jehu;² Isaiah, the prince of the prophets, castigating Ahaz because of his pious dodge;³ and Jeremiah predicting the dishonorable burial of His Royal Highness, Jehoiakim.⁴ As shown in the twenty-third chapter of the roll of Jeremiah, the question is not of the divine right of kings, but of the divine king bringing right into the world.⁵ The prophets were the spiritual watchdogs over all classes of society!

III. The Message of the Prophet

Since a prophet is a man of God, a servant of Yahweh, a messenger of God, an interpreter of God, a seer of the things of God and a speaker of the ways of God to men, he must have a message. Three things are involved in the very word "prophet": God, man and the one who acts as the medium of communication between them (God and man). This medium was the "prophet," and his relationship necessitated a message. This message was about a moral being. His attributes are holiness, justice and love—as the

1. I Kings 21:17-26. 2. Hosea 1:4. 3. Isaiah 7:10ff. 4. Jeremiah 22:13-19. 5. Cf. especially Jeremiah 23:6b.

prophet Isaiah declares: "Righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins." ¹

One aspect of the prophet's message was judgment, based upon the righteousness of God: Yahweh, and He alone is Israel's God, and Yahweh is the Righteous God who vindicates the right. He is "the Holy One of Israel." ² The two oldest written documents quoted by Hebrew writers give evidence of this conception. In the book of the Wars of Yahweh, the consciousness of Yahweh's being their God made Israel strong in battle. He taught their hands to war. It was His battles they fought; the victories they won were the righteous acts and rule of Yahweh in Israel.³ Also in the Book of Jashar⁴ the condition that made Israel's heroes worthy of being commemorated was that they were upright and righteous. This same conception of Yahweh appears in all the words and acts of the prophets.

The prophets were the preachers of the ancient church! "The prophets," as Tholuck observes, "were the living depositories of the idea of the theocracy, or kingdom of God." ⁵

1. Isaiah 11:5; cf. also Isaiah 9; 17. 2. Cf. Edward Pace, *Ideas of God in Israel* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1924), p. 212. 3. Cf. Judges 5:11. 4. Or the *Book of the Upright*. 5. As quoted by A. B. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 8. Used with permission.

In their relation to the law they differ from the Levites.¹ As Edwin Lewis² implies, the latter explained the Law; the former enforced it. The prophet emphasized the spirit, the priest, the letter of the Law. The prophets explored the depths of the "divine teaching" and came up armed with the fundamental principles, concentrated into one formula: the retributive righteousness of Yahweh. Sin must be punished was the keystone of their message. With this terrible weapon they sought to curb and coerce the idolatrous and immoral leanings of their nation and to keep the people's hearts true to the allegiance of the true and living God.³ Hence, the prophet Amos sounded the death knell of Yahweh: "For three transgressions . . . yea, for four, I will not turn it away. . . ." ⁴ The "it": Retributive punishment of Yahweh against Israel, Judah and the surrounding nations, because each one of them had sinned against either conscience, the word of Yahweh or the love of Yahweh.⁵

The prophetic message reveals that economic resources, political power and military might fade into insignificance

1. Cf. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1946), pp. 222-30. 2. Edwin Lewis, "God and Man," *The Interpretation—A Journal of Bible and Theology*, VII, 3, 284ff. 3. Cf. G. G. Findlay, *The Books of the Prophets* (London: Charles H. Kelly, 1896), I, 276ff. 4. Cf. Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6. 5. *Ibid.*, 1-2.

in the overruling providence of a sovereign God. In his *Les Miserables*, Victor Hugo gives a graphic description of the battle of Waterloo (1815), indicating how the Duke of Wellington won this battle not by his superior generalship or resources, but by the unexpected and uncontrollable course of events. One of the several explanations for Napoleon's defeat is singled out by Victor Hugo:

Was it possible that Napoleon should win this battle? We answer—No! Why? Because of Wellington? Because of Blucher? No! Because of God.

For Bonaparte to be conqueror at Waterloo was not in the law of the nineteenth century. Another series of facts were preparing in which Napoleon had no place. The ill-will of events had long been announced. It was time that this vast man should fall. . . . Napoleon had been impeached before the infinite and his fall was decreed. He vexed God.

Waterloo is not a battle; it is a change of front in the universe.¹

Victor Hugo is saying God's hand is on the wheel of history. The individual or nation who opposes His will faces destruction!

Also the prophets were firm believers in the ultimate redemption of man based upon the eternal love of God: ". . . I have loved thee with an everlasting love. . . ." ² Love is the key to divine life in the prophetic book of the Pentateuch, in Deuteronomy and in the book of Hosea.³

1. Victor Hugo, *Les Miserables* (A. L. Burt Co., 1935, Random House, Inc., New York. Translated by Charles E. Wilbur; revised and edited by Frederick Mynon Cooper, 1933), I, 337-38. 2. Jeremiah 31:3. 3. Cf. the two figures of Yahweh—love: husband (Chapter 2) and father (Chapter 11).

"Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he My darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I do clearly remember him still . . . My heart ardently longs for him. . . ." ¹ These emotional outbursts show that the heart of the Eternal was charged and surcharged with love in the Old Testament Dispensation. It is true that the God of Israel was righteous and He demanded corresponding righteousness from men. However, at the very beginning He was a God of love, Who sought man's love in return. First the Exodus, then Sinai; first redemption, then Law; first love, then discipline. Through His deeds and His word by the prophets, He made all of this crystal clear—love will find a way!

The prophets were intelligent depositories and exponents of a two-fold idea: Union of God with man in the person of the Messiah, and the life of man in communion with God in an element of holiness—one, the element of promise; the other, of love. This union of man with God in perfect harmony of mind and heart is the result of historical actions along two lines. Along one of these God descends and reveals Himself, coming to man until He becomes man. Along the other, man is raised up, enlightened and purified until he is capable of receiving God. These two lines converge in the Incarnation—in Christ, who is both God and man; towards

1. Jeremiah 31:20; cf. Norman H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament* (London: The Epworth Press, 1950, Fourth Impression), pp. 131-42 on "The Election-Love of God."

which the revelation and life of the Old Testament was constantly moving. Hence the Old Testament prophecies run to Christ as the tidal rivers to the sea. As Charles A. Briggs asserts: "The union of God and man is the golden thread of Hebrew history and of Hebrew religion."¹

In order to awaken within man the desire to accept God's redemption, the prophet spoke of sin, guilt and wrath; of love, mercy and pardon; of a pitying father, or a yearning, compassionate God and of the past history of the people—the same great themes that a modern preacher expounds.

Again the spirit of power working within the lives and minds of the prophets made them confirmed optimists. They possessed an undaunted faith! When they looked at the generations they were pessimistic, but when they looked at the centuries they were optimistic. They knew that society is neither destroyed nor built in a day. Also they were convinced that the future of humanity is not centered in the weapons of its warfare, however vital these may be, but in the *eternal purpose of a redemptive God*. The true Old Testament prophet never ceased dreaming of the day:

... in the sequel of the days it shall come to pass that the mount of the house of Yahweh shall be established at the head of the mountains . . . and all people shall flow to it. Many nations shall come and say: Come let us go up to the mount of Yahweh and to the house of the God of Jacob that He may teach us His ways

1. Cf. the Prophetic Ideal in Charles Augustus Briggs, *Messianic Prophecy* (New York: Charles Scribners Sons, 1898), pp. 28-33.

and we will walk in His paths. For from Zion the Law shall go forth and the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem! Then He shall judge between many peoples and mediate for strong nations . . . and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruninghooks; they shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more! ¹

The soul of Micah, the Morashite, yearned for a first-ripe fig (one convert), but he looked optimistically to the future. Said he, ". . . I will look expectantly to Yahweh; I will wait for the God of my salvation. . . ." ² Amos could hear the death rattle in the throat of the Northern Kingdom; the exile was inevitable. But in the Epilogue of Hope ³ he saw a new day:

In that day will I raise again the fallen tabernacle of David . . . and I will restore the fortune of My people Israel . . . they shall never again be uprooted from their land . . . says Yahweh your God. ⁴

Also the prophet Isaiah dreamed:

In that day shall there be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come to Egypt, and the Egyptian to Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians. ⁵

Likewise, in his roll, the prophet Ezekiel (the first systematic theologian) in chapter thirty-six (the heart of his

1. Cf. Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-4. 2. Micah 7:7. 3. Amos 9:8b-15.
4. Amos 9:11-15. 5. Isaiah 19:23.

theology) speaks of a new heart¹ and a new spirit—the Old Testament's forerunner of the new birth. As the apostle Paul asserts, the Old Testament Dispensation was not of Law,² but of promise. “. . . a covenant confirmed beforehand by God, the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years *after*, doth not disannul, so as to make the promise of none effect.”³ Hence, Jeremiah, the prophet from Anathoth, who more nearly approximated our Lord than any other Old Testament prophet, in the Book of Hope,⁴ born out of high hope and calm confidence in the future,⁵ after the fall of Jerusalem in 586 B.C. (with the disappearance of the nation, the Temple and the Ark) peals out an optimistic note as he dreamed of “a new covenant”:⁶

See, in the coming days, Oracle of Yahweh, I make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers. . . . But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel. . . . I will put My Law in their inward parts and upon their hearts will I write it, and

1. The heart—the thing which is eternal and immutable. 2. The “ten words” were merely a written statement of the moral laws which existed long before Moses summarized them in the Decalogue. Cf. Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21. 3. Galatians 3:17 (ARV). 4. Jeremiah 30-31. 5. Cf. Joseph M. Gettys, *op. cit.*, p. 51. 6. Cf. John Skinner, *op. cit.*, pp. 320-34 for a discussion of this.

I will be their God, and they shall be My people. And no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each teach his brother saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, Oracle of Yahweh; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more.¹

One evening Jesus of Nazareth arose and spoke in the upper room: "This cup is the new covenant in my blood."²

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the author has attempted to show that the Old Testament prophets perched themselves upon their spiritual watchtower and became the mouthpieces, or representatives, of Yahweh to man. Their strategic place in the Divine Economy of God is evidenced by the Name, Mission and Message of the prophets. May the Eternal use each reader along with myriads of other faithful "servants of Yahweh" in His great redemptive program of the ages, that through them, in them and by them, in the sequel of the days "... the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of Yahweh as the waters cover the sea!"³

NOW LET THE TWELVE SPEAK!

1. Jeremiah 31:31-34. 2. Cf. Luke 22:20; I Corinthians 11:25; II Corinthians 3:6; Hebrews 8:8-12 (ARV). 3. Habakkuk 2:14.

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

The prophet Obadiah prophesied after 586 B.C.

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH

Obadiah

Doom of Edom

TITLE¹ VERSE

- 1 The vision² of Obadiah:³ The Lord Yahweh speaks thusly concerning Edom:⁴ We⁵ have heard a rumor from Yahweh and a messenger⁶ has been sent among the nations. Arise and let us go up and wage war against her!

ANNOUNCEMENT OF DOOM

- 2 Look, I have made you small⁷ among the nation; you
3 are greatly despised.⁸ The pride of your heart has deceived you, O dweller in the clefts of the rock; the height is his habitation;⁹ the one saying in his heart:
4 Who can cast me down to the earth? If you exalt yourself as the eagle, and if between the stars you place your nest, from there I will bring you down, Oracle of
5 Yahweh.¹⁰ If thieves came to you, if robbers by night—how are you cut off!—would they not steal until they
6 had enough?¹¹ If the grape gatherers came to you, would they not leave some gleanings?¹²

1. Obadiah has two titles: "The vision of Obadiah" and "Thus the Lord Yahweh speaks concerning Edom" (*cf.* Nahum 1:1). 2. Title of the entire book—supplied by the prophet himself, or by the compiler of the minor prophets. 3. "Worshiper" or "Servant of Yahweh"—not an uncommon name in the Old Testament, occurring before and after the exile. (*cf.* I Kings 18:3-16; I Chronicles 3:21; 7:3; 8:38; 9:16, 44; 12:9; 27:19; II Chronicles 17:7; 34:12; Ezra 8:9). 4. Theme of the book—could be a quotation from an older prophet (*cf.* Jeremiah 49:14-16). 5. Prophet and people alike. 6. A "herald." 7. Always a small nation—smallness here is the result of defeat and subjection. 8. *Cf.* Jeremiah 49:15. 9. "Sela," the name of the Edomite capital: "Petra" in Greek. Their houses were hewn out of limestone rocks. 10. Yahweh decrees doom upon all who defy Him. He is the controller and determiner of nations. 11. The despoilers of Edom are no common thieves. They will keep on destroying for the sake of destroying. 12. Grape gatherers who leave no grapes (*cf.* Jeremiah 49:9).

- 7 How searched out is Esau, how plundered his treasures!¹
 As far as your own border² they have brought you! All
 the men of your coalition³ have betrayed you. The men
 of your peace have ruined you; those who eat your
 bread⁴ have set a trap for you—there is no discernment⁵
 8 in him. Shall not I in that day, Oracle of Yahweh, even
 destroy the wise men out of Edom, and understanding
 9 from the mount of Esau? Even your heroes will be
 confounded O Teman,⁶ because everyone from the
 mount of Esau will be cut off by slaughter.

REASONS FOR JUDGMENT

- 10 Because of violence against your brother Jacob,⁷ shame
 will cover you⁸ and you will be annihilated forever.
 11 In the day when you stood aloof,⁹ in the day when
 strangers took captive his substance,¹⁰ when foreigners
 entered his gates and cast lots¹¹ over Jerusalem, even
 you were as one of them!¹²

1. V. 6. A parenthesis: in an exclamatory manner the prophet sees the raiding hosts penetrate into the remotest valleys and caves of Edom, dragging out men and treasure. 2. Ruthlessly ejecting the people of the land. 3. The friendly nomadic tribes who forsake Edom and plunder her . . . In 312 B.C. a historical statement that Petra is occupied by the Nabathaeans . . . Aramaic and not Arabian. 4. Not in LXX—due to a probable mechanical repetition of the letters of the previous word. 5. Cf. Jeremiah 49:7: Edomites prided themselves on their wit. 6. Cf. Amos 1:12; Eliphaz, the example of human wisdom was a Temanite (cf. Job 4:1). 7. Cf. Deuteronomy 23:7ff—the pivotal point of the prophecy: the crowning vengeance against Esau is to take place because of his climactic outrage toward his brother Jacob when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem in 586 B.C. 8. Cf. Micah 7:10. 9. Or “stood by”: “You did not lift a finger to prevent it.” (Cf. II Samuel 18:13; II Kings 2:7; Psalm 38:11 for the phrase.) 10. Army, or military force; cf. v. 13: the treasures of Jerusalem (cf. Isaiah 8:4; 10:4). 11. Cf. Joel 3:3. 12. Brief and bitter statement more vindictive than all the multiplicity of robbery, rape and murder which have been enumerated.

- 12 Gloat not¹ over the day of your brother, the day of his
misfortune.² Rejoice not³ over the sons of Judah in the
day of their destruction and enlarge not your mouth⁴
13 in the day of calamity. Enter not the gate of My people
in the day of their misfortune. Gloat not, yea you, over
his misfortunes in the day of disaster; neither extend
your hand toward his substance in the day of his
14 calamity. Nor stand at the crossroads⁵ to cut off his
refugees, nor arrest his escapees in the day of anguish.

TERRORS OF THE DAY OF YAHWEH⁶

- 15 For the day of Yahweh⁷ is near upon all the nations!⁸
As you have done, so will it be done to you; your action
16 will bounce back upon your own head. Just as you⁹
have drunk upon My Holy Mountain, all the nations
shall drink continuously; yea they shall drink and
stagger, and be as though they never existed.¹⁰

1. Sudden shift to imperative—with pleasure (*cf.* Psalm 22:17). 2. *Cf.* Job 31:3—the day of his strangeness: “aliena fortuna.” 3. With malignance (*cf.* Psalm 35:19, 24; 38:16). 4. With laughter (*cf.* Psalm 35:21; Isaiah 57:4; Ezekiel 35:13). 5. פֶּרֶץ: not found elsewhere—meaning “cleaving” or “clearing.” LXX: διεκβολή: a pass between the mountains. Arabic forms from the same root suggest the sense of a band of men standing apart from the main body on the watch for stragglers. Calvin: “the going forth”; Gratz פֶּרֶץ: “breach.” Probably suggests that the Edomites occupied the passes from Jerusalem to Jericho and actually cut off unhappy fleeing Jews. 6. The prophecy widens and Edom only appears as a typical enemy of Yahweh, who is to be punished with the rest of the nations in the universal triumph of Israel. 7. *Cf.* Joel 1:15; 2:1, 31; *cf.* Joel 3:7 for the Nemesis. 8. Widening of the pregnant idea of the eschatological outlook which began in Ezekiel (*cf.* Ezekiel 38). 9. The prophet seemingly turns and addresses his own people: the drinking will therefore assume the meaning of suffering for Yahweh’s chastising wrath (*cf.* Zechariah 12:2). As Yahweh has made His people suffer, now He will punish the nations that were His instruments (*cf.* Jeremiah 35). 10. After drinking Yahweh’s cup of wrath they will be annihilated.

FUTURE GLORY OF ISRAELITES

- 17 But in Mount Zion there shall be a remnant¹ and it shall be holy and the house of Jacob² shall possess their
18 possessions.³ The house of Jacob⁴ shall be fire,⁵ the house of Joseph a flame,⁵ and the house of Esau shall become stubble;⁵ and they shall kindle in them and consume them and there shall be no survivor out of the
19 house of Esau—for Yahweh has spoken. And they of the Negeb shall possess Mount Esau, and they of the Shephelah the Philistines,⁶ also they shall possess the fields of Ephraim and the fields of Samaria,⁷ and Benjamin
20 shall possess Gilead. The exiles of this host of the children of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites to Zarephath. The exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad⁸ shall possess the cities of the Negeb. And saviours⁹ shall come up to Mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau, and the kingdom shall be Yahweh's.

1. Cf. Joel 3:5; 4:17. 2. Cf. Nahum 2:2: the whole family of Israel will share in the glorious restoration. 3. LXX: "those who have disinherited them." 4. The Northern Tribes are now united with their Southern brethren (cf. Jeremiah 31:18; Ezekiel 37:16; Zechariah 10:6). Cf. Isaiah 11:13 for the prediction of this united overthrow of Edom. 5. Image of fire and stubble is common (cf. Isaiah 1:31; 5:24; 10:17; 33:14; Zechariah 12:6). 6. Reverse of the conditions after the Jews went into exile, for then the Edomites came upon the Negeb and the Philistines on the Shephelah. 7. LXX: "The mountain (the rest of Judah, outside the Negeb and the Shephelah) shall possess Ephraim and the field of Samaria." 8. Difficult to identify: Cheyne: Caparda of the Behistun Inscriptions, in Bithynia or Galatia. Schrader: Saparda of the Sargon Inscriptions, in Babylonia; the Jews: Spain (so Onkelos). 9. LXX: "These who are saved"—a gleam of divine sunshine in a driving mist. Connected with the phrase "the kingdom shall be Yahweh's" which closes the Oracle which began, "the day of Yahweh." It appears that the saying "saviours shall come up" means more than a mere victorious army asserting the supremacy of Israel. The prophet impelled by the prophetic spirit saw "saviours" or "deliverers" climbing Mount Zion. What he saw could have been: the Saviour of the world, Who is judge of the world: the kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ (cf. Revelation 11:15-17). Yahweh will have the last word; He cannot fail!

THE BOOK OF JOEL

The Prophet Joel prophesied c. 450 B.C.¹

1. There are strong contentions for a pre-exilic date.

THE BOOK OF JOEL

Joel I Locust Plague a Harbinger of the Day of Yahweh

THE INVASION OF THE LOCUSTS

1 The word of Yahweh which came to Joel,¹ the son of
2 Pethuel.² Listen to this you old men³ and pay attention
you inhabitants of the land! Has this ever occurred in
3 your day, or in the days of your fathers? Tell it to your
children, and let your children tell their children and
4 their children, the next generation. What the palmer-
worm left the locust ate; what the locust left the canker-
worm ate; and what the cankerworm left the caterpillar
5 ate.⁴ Awake you drunkards and weep! Howl all of you
winebibbers! Because the new wine is cut off from your
6 mouth. For a nation⁵ strong and numerous has come
up against My land; his teeth are like lion's teeth, and
7 his jaw teeth⁶ of a huge lion. He has ruined my vine
and barked my fig tree; he has stripped and cast them
8 away, making white their branches. Wail like a virgin
girded with sackcloth for the husband⁷ of her youth.
9 The meal-offering and drink-offerings⁸ are cut off from
the house of Yahweh. The priests and the ministers of
Yahweh mourn.

1. "Yahweh is God." 2. "Persuaded of God." 3. Not the official elders, but the "aged" who transmitted the lore of the past to the next generation. 4. Literally: "shearer," "swarmer," "lapper," "devourer," describing four of the eighty or ninety species of locusts in the East. 5. The swarms of locusts are a nation; their approach like an invading army is described more graphically in 2:4-11. 6. The "eyeteeth" or "projectors"—jaws of some locusts are toothed like a saw. They can gnaw wood and leather as well as foliage. 7. Left a widow before she is married. 8. Standing for the daily sacrifice (*cf.* Numbers 15:5; 28:7; Exodus 29:38).

- 10 The fields are parched, the land mourns; because the grain is devastated, the new wine is dried up, and fresh
11 oil languishes. Be ashamed,¹ O you farmers, lament O you vinedressers over the wheat and barley; because the
12 harvest of the field is ruined. The vine withers, and the fig tree languishes. The pomegranate tree, also the palm tree and the apple tree, even all the trees of the field are dried up; joy has disappeared from the sons of men.

CALL TO REPENTANCE

- 13² Put on sackcloth and lament, O priests; wail, you ministers of the altar. Come and lie all night in sackcloth, you ministers of my God! Because the meal-offering and
14 drink-offering are cut off from the house of God. Consecrate a fast; call a solemn assembly. Gather the old men and all the inhabitants of the land in the house of Yahweh³ your God and implore Yahweh.

TERRORS OF THE DAY OF YAHWEH

- 15 Alas for the day! For the day of Yahweh is near! As
16 destruction from the Almighty it comes! Is not the food cut off before our eyes? Gladness and joy from the
17⁴ house of our God? The seed shrivels under their clods, the silos are empty and the barns are falling down
18 because the grain has dried up. How the beasts groan! The herds of the cattle are perplexed because they have no pasture; yea, the flocks of sheep are stunned.⁵

1. The vinedresser, like the vine of v. 10, is to be embarrassed. The prophet's poetic spirit compels men, crops and fields to mourn together.
2. Returns to v. 9. Priests are addressed on the same plane as drunkards in v. 5. 3. The Temple. 4. A drought usually accompanies a locust plague (*cf.* Amos 7:1-4). 5. נִשְׁמוֹן for נִאֲשָׁמוֹן = "are guilty" or "are punished" (so Nowack, Wellhausen, Driver, *et al.*).

- 19 O Yahweh I cry to Thee! For fire has consumed the
pastures in the wilderness¹ and flame² has scorched all
20 the trees of the forest. Even the beasts³ of the field
moan to Thee, because the waterbrooks⁴ are dry and
fire has devoured the pastures of the wilderness.

1. Uncultivated land, where sheep graze (*cf.* Amos 1:2). 2. Heat and drought, which accompany the plague of locust. 3. Even the wild beasts share the distress and pant to Yahweh (*cf.* Psalm 42:1ff.). 4. Ἀφέσεις ὑδάτων: a technique for irrigating ditches in Egypt during the period of the Ptolemies and Romans.

VIVID PICTURE OF THE COMING JUDGMENT

- 1 Blow the trumpet¹ in Zion and sound the alarm in
My Holy Mountain! Let all the inhabitants of the land
tremble,² for the day of Yahweh is coming—it is near!
- 2 A day of darkness and gloom, a day of clouds and thick
darkness; like the dawn dispersed upon the mountains.
A great and mighty people, their likeness has never been
in antiquity; nor will it be again for generation after
- 3 generation to come. Fire devours before them, behind
them a flame consumes. The land is like the garden of
Eden³ before them; behind them a desolate wilderness,
- 4 yea, nothing escapes them. Their appearance is as the
appearance of horses,⁴ and they run like horsemen.
- 5 They rattle like the noise of chariots on the tops of
the mountains, like the crackle of flames of fire devour-
ing stubble, even as a powerful people arranged for
- 6 battle.⁵ At their presence the people tremble; all their
7 faces turn pale. They run like soldiers, they scale the
walls like warriors; they march, every man keeping
- 8 step,⁶ and they do not break their ranks. They do not
crowd one another, each marching in his own path; they
- 9 burst through the missiles unscathed.⁷ They scour a city,
they run upon the walls; they climb into houses, they
- 10 enter the windows like a thief.⁸ The earth quakes

1. Announcement of danger (*cf.* Jeremiah 6:17; Ezekiel 33:3; Hosea 8:1). The summons is to acts of penitence in face of the scourge. 2. A great locust cloud is like an eclipse. 3. *Cf.* Ezekiel 36:26-35. The garden of Eden in Genesis is only mentioned in these two passages. 4. Resemblance of locusts to horses has often been observed. 5. Compared to a "cataract," "torrent," "rushing wind" or "raging flame" heard six miles away. 6. Each squadron remains compact, like the regiments in an army. 7. They act under a common impulse—none leaving the rank. 8. The doors being closed, they pour through the unglazed windows. The same image is used in the New Testament for our Lord's coming (*cf.* Matthew 24:43ff; Luke 12:39; I Thessalonians 5:2; II Peter 3:10).

- before them, the heavens tremble; the sun and moon are darkened and the stars withdraw their shining.¹
- 11 Yahweh utters His voice² before His army because His host is very great, for the one executing His word is strong. The day of Yahweh is great and something awful, and who can endure it?

EXHORTATION TO REPENTANCE

- 12 Yet even now, Oracle of Yahweh, return to Me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping and with
- 13 mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments,³ and return to Yahweh your God. For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in loving
- 14 kindness and repents Himself concerning calamity. Who knows, He might return and repent, and leave a blessing⁴ behind Him, meal-offering and drink-offering for
- 15 Yahweh your God. Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify
- 16 a fast, and call a solemn assembly.⁵ Gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the old men, collect the children and those who suck the breasts (the infants). Let the bridegroom come forth out of his chamber
- 17 and the bride from her bridal tent.⁶ Let the priests, the ministers of Yahweh weep between the porch and altar;⁷ let them say: Spare Thy people O Yahweh and make not Thy heritage a reproach for the heathen to rule

1. A great storm accompanies, follows the locust invasion. 2. In the terrific storm the prophet hears Yahweh's voice (*cf.* I Samuel 12:18; Psalm 18:14; 46:8). 3. Joel, like other canonical prophets, demands that penance be heart-felt: "heart-sorrow" and a clean life ensuing (*cf.* Ezekiel 36:26). 4. A new harvest, which will make the meal-offering and drink-offering again possible. 5. Called in terror in 1:14 and 2:1; now summoned in hope of divine compassion. 6. All sorts and ages of people are summoned—even the bride and bridegroom to whom a year's exemption from public duty was allowed (*cf.* Deuteronomy 24:5). 7. Inner part of the court of the priests (*cf.* Ezekiel 8:16). Here Zechariah was standing when he was martyred (*cf.* II Chronicles 24:20; Matthew 23:25).

BLESSINGS IN IMMEDIATE FUTURE

- over them. For why should the nations sneer: Where is your God?
- 18¹ Then Yahweh was jealous for His land and had com-
 19 passion on His people. Yahweh answered and said to
 His people: Behold, I am sending you grain, wine and
 oil and you will be satisfied; and I will never again
 20 make you a reproach among the nations. I will remove
 the northern army² far from you and I will drive them
 into a barren and desolate land. His front, into the
 Eastern Sea and his rear, into the Western Sea; his
 stench shall arise and his foul smell ascend because he
 21 had done great things.³ Fear not, O land! Be glad and
 22 rejoice for Yahweh has done great things. Fear not,
 O you beasts of the field! For the pastures of the
 wilderness are green; the trees yield their fruit; the fig
 23 tree and vine yield their full harvest. Be glad then, you
 children of Zion and rejoice in Yahweh your God; for
 He gives you the early rain in just measure⁴ and He
 will pour down upon you the rain, the early rains and
 24 latter rains⁵ as before.⁶ The threshing floors shall be full
 of grain and vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.
 25 I will restore to you the years the locusts have eaten,⁷
 the cankerworm, the caterpillar and the palmerworm⁸

1. The turning point of the book: the fast day evidently was held; the populace repented; the calamity lifted; and Yahweh intervened, heard and forgave. 2. The terrible locusts are to be removed, scattered into the desert, the Dead Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. 3. Terrible and repulsive as locusts were, they turned the people to repentance. 4. Hebrew לְצַדִּיקָה = "for righteous"; when הַמּוֹרֶה is combined with לְצַדִּיקָה some translate "teacher" or "revealer" of "righteous" (Messiah)—so Targum, Symmachus, Vulgate, Rashi, *et al.*—but the context does not warrant this translation—"a strange exposition" (Calvin). 5. September-October and March-April, so necessary for the fertility of the land in Palestine. 6. So LXX and Syriac. 7. The locusts came year after year. 8. The change of order here shows that no emphasis is to be placed in 1:4 on the succession of different kinds: "swarmer," "hopper," "devourer" and "shearer."

- 26 —My great army, which I sent among you. You shall eat plentifully and be satisfied, and praise the name of Yahweh your God Who has dealt so wondrously with you; and My people shall never again be put to shame.
- 27 And you shall know that I am in the midst of Israel and that I am Yahweh your God and there is none else. And My people shall never again be put to shame.

OUTPOURING OF THE SPIRIT

- 28 And it shall come to pass after such things¹ that I will pour out My spirit upon all flesh;² then your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream
- 29 dreams and your young men shall see visions.³ Even upon your menservants and maidservants, in those days,
- 30 I will pour out My spirit.⁴ I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood, fire and pillars of
- 31 smoke.⁵ The sun shall be turned into darkness⁶ and the moon into blood, before the coming of the great and
- 32 terrible day of Yahweh. Also, it shall be that all who call on the name of Yahweh shall be saved; for in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be those who escape as Yahweh has said, and among the survivors⁷ shall be those whom Yahweh calls.

1. Carries us far away from the locust plagues, repentance and restoration. Begins v. 1 of Chapter 3 in the Hebrew—vv. 28-32 compose the chapter.

2. Not animals, but all mankind. 3. Cf. Numbers 11:29; Acts 2:17-21.

4. In Ezekiel 39:29; Zechariah 12:10 the spirit is promised to Israel, the king's house, and the favored dwellers in Jerusalem. But Joel goes further and anticipates the grand universalism of the book of Jonah: "all flesh"—all classes, both sexes. 5. The ravages of war (cf. Ezekiel 38:22). 6. The darkening of the sun (cf. Joel 2:10; 3:15; Exodus 10:21; Isaiah 13:10; 34:4; Jeremiah 4:23; Ezekiel 32:7; Amos 8:9). The terror of an eclipse is a fit symbol of that great and dreadful day, when heaven and earth will pass away. 7. The "remnant in Jerusalem" embraces all who believe, or shall believe, from all nations, kindred and tongues.

JUDGMENT UPON THE NATIONS:

WRONGS DONE TO THE JEWS AVENGED

- 1 In those days and at that time I will return the captivity²
- 2 of Judah and Jerusalem. I will muster all nations and bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat;³ there I will enter into judgment with them for My people and for My heritage, Israel, whom they scattered among
- 3 the nations and My land they carved up. They⁴ cast lots over My people and they gave a boy for a harlot and sold a girl for wine and drank it.

JUDGMENT UPON PHOENICIA

- 4 Also what are you to Me,⁵ O Tyre and Zidon and all the territories of Philistia?⁶ Shall you pay Me a recompense? If you should requite Me, swiftly and speedily I would return your dealing back upon your own head.
- 5 Because you took My silver and gold, My priceless
- 6 possessions into your temples. The children of Judah and the children of Jerusalem are sold to the sons of the Greeks in order to remove them far from their own
- 7 border.⁷ Take notice, I am arousing them from the place where you sold them and I will return your dealing
- 8 back upon your own head. Furthermore, I will sell your sons and daughters into the hand of the children of Judah and they shall sell them to the Shebans⁸—a distant nation—for Yahweh has spoken.

1. In the Hebrew, chapter four (4). 2. Or "restore the fortune"—realization of the Messianic hopes of the returned exiles which fired their imaginations and thrilled their hearts. 3. Called valley of Decision in v. 14. The valley of Kidron between Jerusalem and Olivet was called the valley of Jehoshaphat (*cf.* I Kings 15:13; II Kings 23:6, 12; II Chronicles 30:14). 4. Nations exploited the girls and boys of the unhappy Jews as current coin to purchase the means of debauchery, harlots and wine. 5. That I should withhold punishment from you. 6. The immediate neighbors of Israel at every period of its history. 7. The remote horizon on the West. 8. The great trading race in Arabia; LXX: "they shall give them into captivity."

WORLD JUDGMENT

- 9 Announce this among the nations:¹ Prepare² for war,
arouse the mighty men! Let all the soldiers muster and
10 let them come up!³ Beat your plowshares into swords
and your pruninghooks into spears;⁴ let the weak say:
11 I am strong! Hurry and come all you surrounding
nations; gather yourselves and bring down hither⁵ your
12 mighty men, O Yahweh. Let the nations bestir them-
selves and come up to the valley of Jehoshaphat, for
there I will sit to judge all the surrounding nations.
13 Thrust in the sickle for the harvest is ripe; come and
tread for the wine vat is full. The vats are overflowing,
14 for their wickedness is great. Multitudes, multitudes⁶
15 in the valley of Decision! The day of Yahweh is near in
16 the valley of Decision. The sun and the moon are
darkened, even the stars withdraw their shining.⁷ Yah-
weh also shall roar⁸ from Zion and utter His voice
from Jerusalem. Then the heavens and earth will
tremble, but Yahweh will be a refuge for His people
17 and a stronghold for the children of Israel. Then you
shall know that I am Yahweh your God, the One Who
dwells in My Holy Mountain. Then Jerusalem shall be
holy and strangers shall no longer pass through her.

1. Terrible irony (*cf.* Isaiah 8:9f.). 2. Literally: "sanctify" (*cf.* I Samuel 7:8f.; Jeremiah 6:3). 3. The technical Hebrew word for going out to war. 4. The deliberate reversal of the beautiful promise of Messianic reign in Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3. 5. A late Aramaic word. 6. Repetition is the natural way of expressing untold numbers. 7. Symbol of divine judgment: terror and confusion of divine wrath (*cf.* Isaiah 2:10, 31; 13:10; Ezekiel 32:7; Matthew 24:29; Mark 13:24). 8. Like a lion (*cf.* Amos 3:8; Revelation 5:5).

THE BLESSING FOLLOWING THE JUDGMENT

- 18 And it shall come to pass in that day that the mountains¹ shall drop sweet wine and the hills¹ shall flow with milk and all the brooks of Judah shall run with water. Also a fountain shall spring forth from the house
19 of Yahweh,² watering the valley of Shittim.³ Egypt⁴ shall be a desolation and Edom⁵ a desolate wilderness for the violence committed against the children of Judah, be-
20 cause they shed innocent blood in their land. But Judah shall endure forever—Jerusalem, from generation to
21 generation. I will avenge⁶ their blood⁷ and I will not acquit the guilty,⁸ for I am He Who dwells in Zion.⁹

1. Cf. Amos 9:13. 2. Cf. Zechariah 14:8; Ezekiel 47:1-12; Revelation 22:1ff.; Psalm 46:4. 3. Acacias—valley of Shittim across Jordan where Israel encamped (cf. Numbers 33:49). Ezekiel pictures the waters flowing eastward—across Jordan. The acacia is a desert tree—valley of Shittim, a dry and thirsty place. 4. An old oppressor. 5. The constant thorn in the side of the Israelites (cf. Psalm 137:7; Lamentation 4:22; Ezekiel 25:12; 35:15; 36:5; Obadiah 10-14; Amos 1:11). 6. LXX: ἐκζητήσω = וְנִקְמָתִי (So, Syraic; Nowack; Wellhausen; cf. II Kings 9:7.) 7. Cf. v. 19. 8. The Idumen and Egyptian murderers. 9. The book of Joel passes from the City of Destruction to the Celestial City. This promise parallels the glorious ending of Matthew's Gospel.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

*The Prophet Jonah prophesied c. 780-770 B.C.
(But the book was probably written c. 400 B.C.)*

THE BOOK OF JONAH

Jonah I

Running from God

JONAH'S COMMISSION AND DISOBEDIENCE

- 1 Now the word of Yahweh came to Jonah,¹ the son of
2 Amittai,² saying: Arise, go to Nineveh the great city³
and cry against her for her wickedness has arisen before
3 My face.⁴ But Jonah arose to flee⁵ to Tarshish⁶ from the
face of Yahweh, and he went down to Joppa⁷ and found
a ship scheduled for Tarshish; so he purchased a ticket
and went on board to go with them to Tarshish from
the presence of Yahweh.⁸

JONAH'S PUNISHMENT

- 4 Then Yahweh hurled⁹ a great wind upon the sea and
there arose a great storm upon the sea, and the ship
5 was about to break into pieces.¹⁰ Then the mariners¹¹
cried each man to his god and cast overboard the cargo
which was in the ship to lighten their load. But Jonah
had gone down into the bow of the ship and lay down

1. "A Dove" (*cf.* II Kings 14:25)—the Greek form is "Jonas." He lived at Gath-hepher which was in Zebulun—later Galilee of the Gentiles. Since he lived on the highway of the nations, reports from Nineveh reached his ears. 2. Hebrew: "truth" or "truth-telling." 3. The vastness of the city lived in story long after her fall (*cf.* Genesis 10:12; Nahum 2:11; Strabo 16:1; Diodorus 2:3. 4. *Cf.* Genesis 6:11, 12; 18:20, 21. Their wickedness is so great as to require My open interposition for punishment. 5. Seeking to get beyond the bounds of the Holy Land—out of Yahweh's reach. 6. Tartessus in Spain, the direction opposite of that of Nineveh—the furthest point westward, so averse was he from the mission eastwards to Nineveh (*cf.* Genesis 10:4; Psalm 47:7; Jeremiah 10:9; Ezekiel 28:12, 25). 7. *Cf.* II Chronicles 2:16; Acts 9:43. Today: Jaffa, one of the main ports of Palestine, near Tel-Aviv (*cf.* Joshua 19:46; Ezra 3:7). It was here that Andromeda, in the Greek myth, was chained. Also, the monster which Perseus slew is by mythologists naturally connected with Jonah's whale. 8. Out of the Holy Land where Yahweh dwelt (*cf.* Genesis 4:14; I Samuel 26:19; II Kings 17:20, 23). 9. Implying Yahweh's absolute control of the wind, or elements of nature. 10. Literally: "the ship thought (itself) to be broken"—the living consciousness of the ship, fearful of wreckage in the tempestuous sea, is placed in striking contrast to the lethargic stupor of the prophet, whose conscience is entranced in a swoon. 11. Apparently of mixed nationalities, they worshiped different gods.

- 6 and fell asleep.¹ The captain² of the ship came and said to him: What do you mean, O sleeper? Arise and call to your God; perhaps that God will look with favor
7 upon us and we will not sink. Then they said, each one to his comrade: Come and let us cast lots³ that we may know who is responsible⁴ for this predicament which is upon us. Then they cast lots; the lot fell upon Jonah.
8 They said to him: Tell us, we pray, what is the reason for this calamity that is upon us? What is your vocation? Where do you come from? What is your native country?
9 And who are your people?⁵ Then he answered them: I am a Hebrew⁶ and Yahweh, the God of the heavens,
10 I fear, Who made the sea and the dry land. Then the sailors feared with great fear⁷ and said to him: Why have you done this?⁸ For the sailors knew that he was fleeing from the presence of Yahweh for he (Jonah) had
11 told them. Then they asked him: What shall we do with you⁹ that the sea might be calm upon us? For the

1. "Sleep no necessary prey of innocence—may be the fruit of carnal security and a seared conscience"—here Jonah was exhausted from his hurried journey from Gath-hepher. 2. Shipmaster or chief of the pilots: "skipper," master of the ropemen, a picturesque name for the captain (*cf.* Ezekiel 8:27-29). 3. Usual method of referring things to the appointment or discovery of providence (*cf.* II Samuel 14:42; Proverbs 16:33). 4. Primitive tradition and natural conscience led even the heathen to believe that one guilty man involves all his associates, though innocent, in punishment—"The mariners sailing with Diagoras, an atheist, attributed a storm that overtook them to his presence in the ship" (Cicero). 5. Note the rapid accumulation of questions. 6. Literally: "I am one who crosses over"—the word occurs in the Old Testament thirty-three times—always stands opposite to Gentiles, whether the word is in the mouth of an Israelite or heathen. Probably a name by which the Israelites were known to foreigners. Notice: Jonah does not tell his occupation. Shame holds his tongue! 7. Now plain that they were under divine judgment. 8. Literally: "What is this?"—not a question, but an expression of horror (*cf.* Genesis 3:13). 9. Their idea was that the avenging deity must be appeased with some sacrifice.

- 12 sea was walking and raging. He said to them: Just lift me up and toss me into the sea, then the sea will be quiet from upon you;¹ for I know that I am responsible
13 for this great tempest that is upon you. Nevertheless the sailors rowed hard² to return to the shore, but they were unable to do so for the sea was walking and raging
14 upon them.³ Then they cried to Yahweh and said: We beg Thee, O Yahweh, do not let us sink because of the soul of this man, and lay not innocent blood⁴ upon us
15 for Thou, O Yahweh, doest as Thou delights.⁵ So they took Jonah and hurled him into the sea and the sea
16 ceased its churning.⁶ Then the mariners feared Yahweh with a great fear and they sacrificed a sacrifice⁷ to Yahweh and vowed vows.

JONAH'S WONDERFUL RESCUE

- 17⁸ Now Yahweh had prepared⁹ a great fish¹⁰ to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.¹¹

1. As a prophet, he knew Yahweh's will in the matter. 2. Literally: "dug"—they probably attempted to return the ship back to Joppa. The sailors' effort to save Jonah from his doom is a credit to unenlightened humanity. The sails were by now useless, torn to shreds, the mast gone by the board. They made one final effort: "ploughing" the sea with the oars. 3. The sea was towering up and crashing down on their decks in ruin. 4. The guilt of putting the innocent blood to death (*cf.* Joel 4:19). 5. In finding out the sinful one by sending the great storm. 6. Literally: "stood" (*cf.* Luke 8:24). Yahweh spares the prayerful penitent, a truth illustrated now in the case of the sailors, presently in that of Jonah and thirdly in that of Nineveh. 7. According to their usual custom, but acknowledging Yahweh as a true God—could mean: they vowed to offer sacrifice to Yahweh if they should land. 8. V. 1 of chapter two (2) in the Hebrew. 9. Or appointed (*cf.* Jonah 4:6, 7, 8). 10. The precise kind is nowhere indicated. The word "ketos" in Matthew 12:40 is not restricted in meaning to a whale or a cetacean—may denote any sea monster, either a whale or a shark, or sea dog (common in the Mediterranean, it has a large throat that can swallow a man whole), or a tunny of enormous size. No explanation can remove the miracle. 11. Hebrews count the first and third parts of days as a whole twenty-four hour day (*cf.* Jesus's time in the grave).

THE PRAYER OF JONAH

1 Then Jonah prayed¹ to Yahweh his God out of the belly
 2 of the fish, and said: I called² because of my affliction
 to Yahweh and He answered me; out of the belly of
 3 Sheol³ cried I and Thou didst hear my voice. For Thou
 hast cast me into the deep, in the middle of the seas,⁴
 and the floods surrounded me—all Thy waves and bil-
 4 lows passed over me. But I on my part said: I am cast
 out of Thy sight; yet will I look again toward Thy Holy
 5 Temple. The waters covered me even to the soul; the
 deep⁵ surrounded me, the weeds⁶ were wrapped around
 6 my head. Also I went down to the bottoms⁷ of the
 mountains; the earth with her bars was around me
 forever;⁸ yet Thou delivered my life from oblivion,⁹
 7 O Yahweh, My God. When my soul fainted within me
 then I remembered Yahweh; and my prayer came to
 8 Thee to Thy Holy Temple. Those observing lying
 9 vanities¹⁰ forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice
 unto Thee with the voice of gratitude;¹¹ I will fulfill
 that which I have pledged.¹² Salvation resides with
 Yahweh.¹³

1. Expressing his trust and thankfulness. 2. A past experience—this is a thanksgiving for a deliverance accomplished. 3. Or the grave to which he likens his strange resting-place inside the fish. "Sheol" is thought of as a person, like Greek Hades. (Cf. Isaiah 5:14, where Sheol has a mouth and a desire.) The deliverance from Sheol echoes Psalm 30:3. 4. A phrase borrowed from Ezekiel 27:4, 25. 5. The "tehom" mythical deep referred to in Genesis 1:2. 6. The seaweed grows at the bottom of the sea; this shows how deep Jonah had plunged. Or it could be a figure for his seemingly hopeless, entangled condition. 7. Literally: "cuttings off"—extremities, terminations. 8. So far as his own power of deliverance was concerned. 9. Or "corruption" or "pit" (cf. Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 38:17). 10. "Idols" (cf. Deuteronomy 32:21; Psalm 31:6)—but could mean: the futility of self-will; prophet may have glanced at his own folly, choosing his own way instead of obeying Yahweh's commands ("All who hug a lie, lose God, Who is Truth and Love"—Wordsworth). 11. Cf. Psalm 42:4. 12. Cf. Psalm 50:14, 23 for the payment of vows made in straits to be fulfilled in deliverance. 13. The conclusion of the hymn.

JONAH'S DELIVERANCE

- 10 Then Yahweh spoke to the fish¹ and it vomited out
Jonah on the dry land.²

1. Or intimated His will to the fish: all creatures being under his control.
2. The coast of Palestine from which the ship departed. The parallel of Christ's resurrection is deeper than the fact of a three day's entombment. Jonah saved a ship by voluntarily dying; so Christ laid down his life and took it again. Those He saved were not Jews only, but Phoenicians, pagans, the world.

JONAH'S PREACHING

- 1 Now the word of Yahweh came to Jonah the second
- 2 time¹ saying: Arise, go to Nineveh that great city and
- 3 preach to her the message which I am speaking to you.
- 4 Then Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to
- 5 the word of Yahweh; now Nineveh was an exceedingly
- 6 great city² of three day's journey.³ When Jonah began
- 7 to enter the city a day's journey, he cried and said:
- 8 Yet forty days⁴ and Nineveh destroyed.⁵

THE EFFECT OF JONAH'S PREACHING

- 5 And the men of Nineveh believed God⁶ and called a
- 6 fast⁷ and put on sackcloth⁸ from the least to the greatest.
- 7 When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose
- 8 from his throne and laid aside his kingly regalia and
- 9 put on sackcloth and sat in ashes.⁹ Then he issued
- 10 a proclamation and published it in Nineveh: By order
- 11 of the king and his nobles saying: Let neither man nor
- 12 beast,¹⁰ herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not eat
- 13 nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with
- 14 sackcloth and cry sincerely to God; yea let every man
- 15 turn¹¹ from the error of his way and from the violence

1. Jonah learned obedience by suffering—Yahweh's orders still held.
 2. Literally: "a great city to God"—an expression conveying to the Hebrew mind peculiar greatness and grandeur. 3. In circumference: some forty or fifty miles around—Nineveh appears to have been composed of four cities. Orelli's suggestion that the prophet zig-zagged through several market places satisfies no one! Diodorus (ii, 3) and Herodotus assure us that Nineveh was one day's journey across, c. 20 miles; hence sixty miles in circumference.
 4. Usual scripture time of probation. LXX has "three days." 5. Or "over-thrown" (cf. Genesis 19:21, 25). 6. Cf. Genesis 15:6. They heeded the warning which Yahweh's prophet announced. The ruins of Nineveh are a world's wonder: upon terraces and substructions of enormous breadth rose high palaces, arsenals, barracks, libraries and temples. The walls were so broad that chariots could roll abreast on them. 7. Usual national way of expressing penitential feeling. 8. Sign of humility (cf. Joel 1:13). The king did not begin the fast—he merely yielded to it and gave it national direction. 9. Cf. Esther 4:1, 3; Isaiah 47:5. 10. Heathen nations made their cattle share in their mournings. 11. "Bring forth fruits of repentance."

- 9 which is in their hands. Who knows,¹ God might turn
and repent² and turn aside the fierceness of His anger
10 and we might not perish. And God saw their actions,³
that they had turned from the error of their way, and
God repented⁴ from the calamity that He said that He
would do to them, and He did it not.⁵

1. Cf. Joel 2:14. 2. The only basis of their hope, Yahweh's mercy, resided in the fact that He had graciously sent them warning. 3. Sincerity of their words. 4. As He did at Amos' prayer (cf. Amos 7:3) and at Moses' (cf. Exodus 32:14). But here the prophet does not intercede for the guilty. On the contrary, he is deeply aggravated that Yahweh hears the cry of repentance. 5. The appointed hour came and passed, leaving Nineveh undestroyed—Jonah's reputation as a prophet was at stake!

JONAH'S DISPLEASURE

- 1 But this displeased¹ Jonah exceedingly and he burned
 2 with anger. So he prayed to Yahweh² and said: I beg
 Thee, O Yahweh, was this not my word when I was in
 my native country? Therefore I arose to flee to Tarshish;
 for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, slow to anger
 and abounding in mercy and repentant of calamity.³
 3 Now, O Yahweh, take I pray Thee my life from me for
 it would be better for me to die than live.⁴

THE LESSON FROM THE GOURD VINE

- 4 Then Yahweh said: Do you have a right to be angry?⁵
 5 Then Jonah went out of the city and dwelt on the east
 side of the city⁶ and there made him a booth⁷ and sat
 under it in the shade, until he could see what would
 6 happen to the city. And the God Yahweh prepared a
 gourd vine⁸ and caused it to cover his head to shield
 him from his disappointment, and Jonah was exceed-
 7 ingly well pleased with the gourd vine. Later God

1. Cf. the phrase in Nehemiah 2:10; 13:8. The pride of the prophet was punctured because Yahweh's mercy made him appear to be a false prophet. He was more concerned for his own honor than Yahweh's. 2. He is on speaking terms with Yahweh now. 3. Cf. Exodus 34:6; Joel 2:13.

4. Language of morbid feeling—he thought that his life was no longer of value because he appeared now as a deceiver. This prayer for death brings the Midrash of Jonah in close affinity with the Midrash of Elijah (cf. I Kings 19:4). They belong to the same class of literature. 5. A gentle battering, a rallying of a sulky mind. 6. So Jonah withdraws indignantly to watch from the side of the city the sun rise that he still hopes may be the fulfillment of his fallen denunciation. 7. Temporary hut of branches and leaves (cf. the Feast of Booths)—so loose an arbour of leaves and boughs it would not protect him from the blistering sun. 8. Jonah was to learn by his regret for the withering of a useful plant how much more his compassion should be kindled for conscious beings, even children and cattle. Word: "gourd," Hebrew: "kikajon," the Palma Christe, LXX: "colycuthe," Jerome: "ricinus," a shrub common in Palestine, which grows with extraordinary rapidity in a sandy soil. Its broad leaves give a good shelter. The name used here and in Greek, "kiki," was from Egypt (cf. Herodotus ii, 94; Pliny XV, 7).

prepared a worm¹ and when the morning came the next day it (the worm) smote the gourd vine so that
 8 it withered. When the sun arose God prepared a sultry² east wind³ and the sun so shined upon Jonah's head that he fainted; then he requested death for himself
 9 and said: It is better for me to die than live.⁴ Then God said to Jonah: Do you have a right to be angry concerning the gourd vine? And Jonah replied: I have
 10 a right to be angry even to the point of death!⁵ Then Yahweh said: You had pity on the gourd vine which you neither laboured on, nor caused to grow, which
 11 sprung up in a night and perished in a night.⁶ Then

1. Not an individual worm perhaps, but a class of worm which attacked such swift growing plants (*cf.* army worms attacking cotton). 2. "Glowing hot." 3. The Sherghi, Sherki, or Sirocco—more suffocating and oppressive than even the rays of the sun. 4. In his morbid fretful impatience he imagined that all things were against him. 5. Unreasonable Jonah burning up with anger—angry because the gourd vine was destroyed and angry because Nineveh was spared. None of Yahweh's actions pleased him. 6. As if Jonah had felt a sentimental regret in the sudden decay of the useful plant. A striking argument: so moved concerning the gourd vine which came, the son of a night (literal Hebrew) and perished, the son of a night, with the making of which you had no concern, shall not Yahweh have pity on these creatures, made in His image, into which He breathed His breath—flowers of His heart! The short story may end, but the spiritual lesson is timeless—it flows on! 7. Children under two years of age, commonly about one-tenth of a population. Hence Nineveh contained about 1,200,000 people. 8. A poetical figure for children (*cf.* Deuteronomy 1:39; Isaiah 7:15, 16). 9. The cattle are also Yahweh's; He cares for them!

The sudden conclusion of the book is very impressive. No more is heard of Jonah, but his book served its purpose as the vehicle of divine truth. The great thought remains: Yahweh's heart beats for and He pities and cares for the vast populations of all heathen cities—even the dumb creatures which serve the populace. Again Jonah anticipates Jesus of Nazareth (*cf.* Matthew 6:10-34). The author of a little book termed *From The Abyss* has summoned this passage to give hope for the vast, obscure, shifting, meaningless and purposeless sea of humanity which floods a modern city like London, New York, Tokyo, Paris or Moscow. The only comfort: *Yahweh knows and cares for each!* No individual is an orphan to His Heart! No individual is lost in the sea of humanity!

Jonah IV — Running Ahead of God

should not I have mercy on Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than 120,000⁷ persons who can not discern between their right hand and their left hand,⁸ and also much cattle?⁹

THE BOOK OF AMOS

*The prophet Amos began prophesying c. 760 B.C.
in the Northern Kingdom.*

Amos I

Judgment Upon the Foreign Nations

TITLE VERSE

- 1 The words of Amos who lived among the herdsmen¹ of Tekoa which he saw² concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah, and during the days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the earthquake.³

THE ROAR OF THE LORD

- 2 He said: Yahweh roars⁴ from Zion⁵ and utters His voice from Jerusalem; the pastures of the shepherds mourn and the top of Carmel⁶ withers.

SIN AGAINST CONSCIENCE: SYRIA

- 3 Thus Yahweh says: For three transgressions of Damascus, yea, for four, I will not turn it⁷ away, because they threshed Gilead⁸ with threshing

1. "Nokdim"—shepherds of dwarfed sheep with fine-wool—still called "Nakad" by the Arabs. "Viler than a Nakad" is an Arabian expression of contempt. 2. Specialized word for prophetic insight (*cf.* Numbers 24:4, 16; Isaiah 30:10; Ezekiel 12:27). 3. Astronomically fixed on June 15, 763 B.C. In the year 31 B.C. (Battle of Actium) 10,000 were buried under the ruined houses (*cf.* Josephus: *Antiquities* XV 5, 2). According to Zechariah 14:5, the earthquake in Uzziah's reign left an awful memory. 4. The image of a lion (*cf.* Amos 3:8; Isaiah 31:4; Hosea 11:10; 13:7, 8): the roar with which a lion springs upon his prey. 5. The center of religious authority, the dwelling place of Yahweh (*cf.* Jeremiah 25:30; Joel 3:16). 6. The most fruitful and striking hill in the North: "Carmel"—garden land—a headland c. 1,200 high, south of the Bay of Acre (*cf.* Amos 9:3; Isaiah 33:9; 35:2; Micah 7:14; Nahum 1:4). 7. Punishment is so entrenched in the prophet's thinking that he does not express it. 8. Border land between Laban and Jacob (*cf.* Genesis 31:44)—suffered most from the Aramean aggression.

- 4 instruments¹ of iron.² I will send a fire into the palace of Hazael³ and it shall consume the mansions of
5 Ben-hadad.³ I will also break down the gate-bar⁴ of Damascus and cut off the inhabitant from the valley of Aven⁵ and the holder of the scepter from the house of Eden, and the people of Aram (Syria) shall go into exile to Kir,⁶ Yahweh has spoken.

PHILISTIA

- 6 Thus Yahweh says: For three transgressions of Gaza,⁷ yea, for four, I will not turn it away, because they led captive a whole captivity to deliver them up to Edom.
7 So I will send a fire on the wall of Gaza⁸ and it shall
8 devour her palaces. I will cut off the inhabitant from Ashdod,⁹ and the holder of the scepter from Ashkelon; and I will turn My hand against Ekron,¹⁰ and the last of the Philistines shall disappear, the Lord Yahweh¹¹ has spoken.

1. Cf. II Kings 8:12; 13:7; 10:32 for metaphorical description of pitched raids. 2. Probably "basalt"—called iron by the Arabs. It is used for the teeth of threshing instruments which chop straw into pieces. 3. Two most oppressive kings of Syria who had scourged Israel, including Gilead (cf. II Kings 10:32; 13:3, 7). 4. Laid open the city to the enemy (cf. Deuteronomy 3:5; I Kings 4:13). 5. Could be Baalbek. 6. An unidentified region in the North (cf. Isaiah 22:6). 7. The most southerly of the great Philistine fortress cities on the border of Egypt—as a great emporium on several trade-routes, it would be a center of the slave-traffic. Like Arabs in Africa they were professional "slave-catchers"—raided districts in times of peace and sold the victims to Edom (cf. II Chronicles 21:16; Joel 3:6, 8). 8. Cf. Jeremiah 47:1—the town which cost Alexander the Great two months' siege. 9. 35 miles north of Gaza, afterwards called Azotus. In 635 B.C. it sustained the longest siege in history: Psammethichus I, king of Egypt, besieged it for 29 years (cf. Herodotus ii, 157). 10. The town on the border of Judah—Gath, the fifth famous Philistine town is omitted. 11. Title occurs twenty times in the book of Amos—frequently in Ezekiel (cf. Genesis 15:2, 8; Joshua 7:7).

TYRE

- 9 Thus Yahweh says: For three transgressions of Tyre,¹ yea, for four, I will not turn it away, because they delivered up a whole captivity to Edom, and remembered not the brotherly covenant. Consequently I will send a fire² on the wall of Tyre and it shall devour her palaces.

EDOM

- 11 Thus Yahweh says: For three transgressions of Edom, yea, for four, I will not turn it away, because he pursued his brother with the sword and cast off all pity, kept fretting his anger,³ and keeping his wrath forever.
12 Hence I will send a fire upon Teman⁴ and it shall devour the palaces of Bozrah.

AMMON

- 13 Thus Yahweh says: For three transgressions of the children of Ammon, yea, for four, I will not turn it away, because they have ripped up the pregnant women
14 of Gilead in order to enlarge their border. I will kindle a fire in the wall of Rabbah⁵ and it shall consume her palaces as clamour in the day of battle, or as a tempest
15 in the day of whirlwind. And their king shall go into exile, he and his princes together, Yahweh has spoken.

1. Cf. Ezekiel 27:13: slave-peddlers in their ships to all the world. 2. Burnt by Assyrians under Sargon II, and later by Nebuchadnezzar; Alexander the Great captured it and sold 30,000 of its inhabitants into slavery—now a solitude. Captured by the Saracens in 1291 A.D. 3. Cf. Psalm 103:9. 4. Cf. Obadiah 9 and Ezekiel 25:13: the northern district of Edom. 5. Cf. Deuteronomy 3:11: later Philadelphia, now Amman, 25 miles northeast of the Dead Sea—only Ammonite city mentioned in the Old Testament.

MOAB

- 1 Thus Yahweh says: For three transgressions of Moab, yea, for four, I will not turn it away, for he burned
 2 the bones of the king of Edom into lime. I will send a fire on Moab and it shall devour the palaces of Kerioth;¹ Moab shall die amid tumult² with shouting
 3 and the sound of the war trumpet. I will cut off his judge³ and slay all his princes with him, Yahweh has spoken.

SIN AGAINST THE WORD OF YAHWEH: JUDAH

- 4 Thus Yahweh says: For three transgressions, yea, for four, I will not turn it away, because they spurned the Law of Yahweh⁴ and kept not His statutes, and their lies⁵ led them astray exactly as their fathers walked.
 5 So I will send a fire upon Judah⁶ and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem.

SIN AGAINST LOVE: ISRAEL

- 6 Thus Yahweh says: For three transgressions of Israel, yea, for four, I will not turn it away, because they sell the righteous for silver⁷ and the needy man for a pair
 7 of shoes.⁸ They pant after the dust on the poor man's head,⁹ and pervert the way of the meek.¹⁰ A man and

1. Literally: "cities"—capital composed perhaps several absorbed towns like London. 2. Moabites called "sons of tumult" in Jeremiah 48:45. 3. The ruler of Moab (*cf.* II Kings 15:5): probably the vassal of Jeroboam II. 4. The revealed will or way of God for their lives. 5. *Cf.* II Kings 17:15; Jeremiah 2:5. 6. Fulfilled in 586 B.C. when Nebuchadnezzar took Jerusalem (*cf.* II Kings 25:9). 7. Israel's first sin. 8. Her second sin. 9. Her third sin. 10. The humble followers of the Lord (*cf.* Isaiah 11:4; 29:19; 32:7).

his father go into "the girl"¹ to profane My holy
 8 name.² They stretch themselves beside every altar upon
 clothes that are pledged³ and forfeited wine they drink
 9 at their god's⁴ shrine. Yet I destroyed the Amorite⁵
 before your eyes, whose height was as the cedars and
 he was strong as oaks. Also I destroyed his fruit above
 10 and his roots below. And I brought you up from the
 land of Egypt and led you in the wilderness for forty
 11 years to inherit the land of the Amorite.⁶ I raised up
 some of your sons to be prophets,⁷ and some of your
 youths to be Nazarites.⁷ Is this not true, O children of
 12 Israel? Oracle of Yahweh. But you made the Nazarites
 drink wine⁸ and commanded the prophets saying:
 13 Prophecy not! Look, I am about to press you in your
 14 place as a pressed cart full of sheaves.⁹ Then flight shall
 perish from the swift and neither the strong man prove
 15 his strength, nor the warrior escape with his life.¹⁰ The
 archer shall neither stand his ground, nor the swift-
 footed save himself; and the horseman shall not save his
 16 life. Also the stout-hearted among the warriors shall flee
 unarmed in that day, Oracle¹¹ of Yahweh.

1. Israel's fourth sin: unchastity in corrupted worship (*cf.* Genesis 38:21-22; I Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; II Kings 23:7; Hosea 6:14). 2. *Cf.* Leviticus 18:21; 20:3; Isaiah 48:11; Ezekiel 20:9-14; 36:20-23. 3. Israel's fifth sin: keeping the garment of the poor as a pledge (*cf.* Exodus 22:25-27; Deuteronomy 24:12, 13). 4. Supposedly Yahweh, but really a god of their own—when we worship God with iniquity, we cease to worship Him. 5. *Cf.* Genesis 10:16 for legendary origin. Amorite stands for all the inhabitants of Canaan on both sides of Jordan, before the invasion of Israel (*cf.* Genesis 48:22; Deuteronomy 1:20, 27; Joshua 24:8; I Samuel 7:14; II Samuel 21:2). 6. Did I bring you up out of Egypt for this life of luxury, oppression and greed? 7. The greatest of all God's gifts. 8. The inspired or devout men. Apostles and examples of abstinence were in the age of luxury seduced into the common practices. 9. LXX: Behold, I roll (κυλίω) under you as a wagon full of straw is rolled—vision of immediate judgment. 10. The pressure of Yahweh, fighting against His people, constitutes an irremediable doom. 11. Literally: "Yahweh whispers." The common word for a revelation to a prophet.

MOTTO OF AMOS' PROPHECIES

- 1 Hear this word which Yahweh has spoken against you
 O sons of Israel, against the whole family which I
 2 brought up from the land of Egypt¹ saying: You only
 have I known of all the families of the earth;² therefore
 I will visit upon you all of your iniquities.³

THE PROPHET'S CREDENTIALS

- 3, 4 Do two men travel together unless they agree? Does
 a lion roar in the den unless he has a prey? Does a lion
 growl (out of his den) unless he has made a capture?
 5 Does a bird swoop down to the ground less there is
 a lure for her? Does a trap spring up from the ground
 6 and not catch something? Can an alarm be sounded in
 7 the city and the people not become frightened? Can
 there be a calamity in the city and Yahweh not do it?
 For the Lord Yahweh does not do a thing unless He
 8 reveals it to His servants the prophets.⁴ The lion has
 roared who does not shudder? The Lord Yahweh has
 spoken! Who can keep from prophesying?

ADDRESS TO THE MILITARY MEN

- 9 Proclaim in the palaces of Assyria and in the palaces of
 the land of Egypt and say: Gather upon the mountains
 of Samaria,⁵ and observe the great disorders within her,

1. Judah as well as the Northern Kingdom—all twelve tribes. 2. Or "ground"—Israel purposely chosen by Yahweh to stamp the manners and mortality of all peoples. 3. The "keynote," "the license" and "the charter" of prophecy—religion is no insurance against judgment. 4. The Lord's policy to announce the evils by His prophets, so that the opportunity of repentance be given. 5. Capital of the Northern Kingdom; built by Omri (885-874 B.C.), further fortified by his son Ahab (874-853 B.C.), until it could stand a three year siege by the Assyrians (725-722 B.C.).

- 10 and oppression in her midst. They do not know how to act uprightly¹ and hoard up violence and wrong in their palaces, Oracle of Yahweh.

A PRONOUNCEMENT OF DOOM

- 11 Therefore the Lord Yahweh says: An adversary shall surround your land, and he shall bring down your strength from you, and your mansions shall be looted.
12 Thus Yahweh says: As a shepherd snatches from the lion's mouth (no more than) a pair of knuckle bones² or a piece of an ear, so shall the children of Israel be saved—they who sit in Samaria in the corner of the
13 divan³ and on the silky cushions of a bed. Listen you and testify against the house of Israel, Oracle of the Lord
14 Yahweh, the God of Hosts. On the day when I visit the crimes of Israel upon him, I shall then visit the altars of Bethel, and the horns of the altar⁴ shall be smitten
15 and they shall fall to the ground. And I will smite the winter houses as well as the summer house; the ivory houses⁵ shall perish and the great houses shall come to an end, Oracle of Yahweh.

1. Their moral sensitivity is gone. 2. Hebrew word has to do with the bend of the leg—literally: "shin-bones"—or even all but the ear-tip. 3. The corner of the divan in Eastern houses is the seat of honor. 4. Which men grasp in their last despair. 5. Cf. I Kings 22:39; Psalm 45:8; probably paneled with the ivory houses of the luxurious aristocracy of Samaria.

CONDEMNATION OF THE STATE DOLLS OF SAMARIA

- 1 Hear this word you kine of Bashan¹ who dwell in the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, crush the needy and say to their husbands: Bring, and let us
- 2 drink. The Lord Yahweh has sworn by His holiness, lo, the days are coming when there shall be a taking away of you with hooks and the last of you with fish hooks.²
- 3 Yea, by the breaches³ you shall go out every one head-long, and you shall be cast into Harmon, Oracle of Yahweh.

ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE AT LARGE

- 4 Go to Bethel and transgress⁴ and to Gilgal and multiply transgression! Bring every morning⁵ your sacrifices! Every third day your tithes!⁶ Sacrifice a thank-offering
- 5 without leaven! Declare (your) vows! Make them heard! For this you love (to do), O children of Israel! Oracle
- 6 of the Lord Yahweh. I even gave you clean teeth in all your cities, and lack of bread in all your places—but you have not returned unto Me, Oracle of Yahweh!⁷
- 7 Also I even withheld the winter-rain from you yet while there was three months to the harvest.⁸ I repeatedly let

1. Cf. Deuteronomy 32:14; Ezekiel 39:18; Psalm 22:12. These women care for nothing except their lazy luxury and keep nagging their husbands to provide yet more money that they may spend it in feasting; all the time wholly unconcerned that this money is wrung from the poor and needy by extortion and violence. 2. In the Assyrian monuments captives are dragged literally with hooks in their mouths (cf. II Chronicles 33:11; Job 40:24; 41:2; Isaiah 37:29; Ezekiel 29:4). 3. In the wall of the stormed city. 4. Vv. 4, 5—classic irony. 5. Instead of once a year (cf. I Samuel 1:3, 7, 21). 6. Instead of every three years (cf. Deuteronomy 14:28; 26:12)—outward zeal of unspiritual ritualists; Bethel and Gilgal, with Beer-sheba, were the great religious centers of the Northern Kingdom. 7. Cf. Isaiah 9:12, 17; 10:4 for the pathetic refrain. 8. The harvest is in April-May (cf. Hosea 4:15; 9:15; 12:11).

- it rain on one city, and upon another city I did not let it rain. One strip was rained upon, and the strip
8 that was not rained upon withered. Two or three cities staggered to one city to drink water and were not satisfied, but you have not returned unto Me, Oracle
9 of Yahweh. I smote you with blight and mildew, parching your gardens and your vineyards. Your figs and olives the locusts devoured, but you have not returned
10 to Me, Oracle of Yahweh. I sent among you the pestilence in the way of Egypt. Besides the capture of your horses,¹ I slew your young men with the sword, and I brought up the stench² of your camps to your nostrils—yet you have not returned unto Me, Oracle of
11 Yahweh. I overthrew among you, like God's overthrowing of Sodom and Gomorrah, until you were as a brand plucked from the burning—yet you have not returned
12 unto Me, Oracle of Yahweh. Therefore this³ will I do to you, O Israel! Because I am going to do this,³ prepare
13 to meet your God, Man's Creator, O Israel. For lo, the One forming the mountains and creating the wind, the One declaring to man his thought, the One making morning darkness and the One marching on the high places of earth, Yahweh the God of Hosts is His name.⁴

1. Imported from Egypt or Syria (*cf.* II Kings 13:7). 2. Of unburied corpses (*cf.* Isaiah 34:3). 3. "This . . . this"—silence more impressive than if the nature of the penalty had been named. 4. The peculiar expression "Yahweh is His name" is paralleled in Isaiah 47:4; 48:2; 51:15; 54:5 and in Jeremiah 10:16; 31:35; 32:18; 46:18; 48:15.

A BRIEF POETICAL DIRGE

- 1 Listen to this word which I lift up against you—a Dirge,¹
O house of Israel:
- 2 Fallen, no more shall she rise, Virgin Israel!²
Flung down³ on her ground, no one to raise her!⁴
- 3 Thus says the Lord Yahweh: The city that goes forth
with a thousand shall have an hundred left, and she
that goes forth with an hundred shall have ten left for
the house of Israel.

JUSTIFICATION FOR JUDGMENT

- 4 For thus says the Lord Yahweh to the house of Israel:
- 5 Seek⁵ Me and you shall live! Do not seek Bethel, nor
come to Gilgal, nor cross over to Beer-sheba;⁶ for Gilgal
shall go completely into exile⁷ and Bethel shall come
- 6 to nought. Seek Yahweh and you shall live, lest He leap
out like fire, O house of Joseph,⁸ and consume you,
- 7 there being no one to extinguish it at Bethel. Woe to
those who turn justice to wormwood and cast righteous-
ness down to the ground.

1. A funeral song which has a weird haunting sound. 2. The country conceived as a young girl whom Yahweh loved as in Hosea (*cf.* Isaiah 37:22; 47:1; Jeremiah 14:17; 46:11). 3. Word "nitshah" has the sound of the crash on her ground. 4. The Northern Kingdom was never re-established. 5. Away with churchgoers, sacraments, formal prayers and seek Me. (*Cf.* Psalm 9:10; Isaiah 9:13; Jeremiah 10:21; Hosea 10:12; Zephaniah 1:6.) The cultus at the great shrines Bethel (3:4), Gilgal (4:5) and Beer-sheba is vain. 6. Fifty miles southwest of Jerusalem the most southerly point—necessary to pass over the entire territory of Judah (*cf.* Amos 8:14; I Samuel 8:2). 7. Play on words—"Gilgal shall taste the gall of exile." 8. Ephraim and Manassah.

FLIGHT OF ORATORY

- 8 The Maker of Pleiades¹ and Orion,² the One turning pitch darkness to morning, the day for night and darkness, the One calling the waters of the sea³ and pouring them out on the face of the earth, Yahweh is His name.
- 9 The One flashing ruin on the strong also is the One raining destruction on the fortress.

OTHER EVIDENCES OF WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION

- 10 They⁴ hate the honest witness in the gate,⁵ and the man
11 who speaks the truth, they loathe. Therefore because you trample on the weak and take from him a present of corn (grain), you have built stone houses,⁶ but you shall not live in them; you have planted vineyards for
12 pleasure, but you shall not drink of their wine. For I know how manifold are your crimes and how huge are your sins—you brow-beaters of honest men, takers of blood-money,⁷ who turn aside the poor in the gate.
13 Therefore the prudent man, in such a time, will be silent for it is an evil time.⁸

RENEWED PLEA FOR REPENTANCE

- 14 Seek good and not evil,⁹ that you may live, and Yahweh
15 the God of Hosts be with you as you say (He is). Hate

1. Literally: "the group." 2. Orion: "the giant" or "fool"—Nimrod in later times (*cf.* Job 9:9; 38:31). 3. In great inundations, rather than in clouds and rains (*cf.* Amos 9:6; Job 12:15). 4. Picks up the thought of v. 7. 5. The center of concourse, of business and of administration of justice, like the forum of Rome (*cf.* Deuteronomy 25:7; Ruth 4:1, 11; I Kings 22:10; II Kings 7:1). Amos had probably chosen this as the scene of his preaching. 6. *Cf.* Isaiah 9:10—the newest luxury of the capital. 7. "Kopher" same root as "atonement" (*cf.* Exodus 31:30; Numbers 35:31). Human injustice bribed by cupidity! Divine justice bribed by divine love and sacrifice! 8. It pays to keep silent. 9. Did he still have hopes for those incorrigible people?

evil and love good, and set justice in the gate—
peradventure Yahweh the God of Hosts may be gracious
to the remnant of Joseph.

- 16 Therefore thus says Yahweh God of Hosts the Lord: In
every square there shall be mourning¹ and in every
street they shall say: Alas! Alas! They shall conscript
the husbandman for mourning and the professional
17 wailers² for lamentation. In every vineyard there shall
be mourning, for I will pass through your midst, says
Yahweh.

THE DAY OF YAHWEH: DARKNESS AND DESPAIR

- 18 Woe to those who desire for themselves the day of
Yahweh!³ What have you to do with the day of Yah-
19 weh?⁴ It is darkness, and not light! As when a man flees
from the face of a lion and runs into a bear,⁵ then he
comes into his house and (breathless) leans his hand
20 upon the wall, a serpent bites him.⁶ Shall not the day
of Yahweh be darkness and not light, even pitch dark-
21 ness and not a ray of light in it. I hate, I despise your
feasts,⁷ and I take no delight in⁸ your sacrificial gather-
22 ings.⁹ Though you bring Me burnt-offerings and your
meal-offerings I will not be pleased; I will not regard
23 them. Take away¹⁰ from Me your noisy songs! To the
melody of your viols I will not listen.

1. The Arab mourning consists of women led by professional wailers, bursting out into wild and maniacal shrieks. 2. Cf. II Chronicles 35:25; Ecclesiastes 12:5; Jeremiah 9:17. 3. Cf. Isaiah 2:12-21; Joel 2:1; Zephaniah 1:7, 14-16. 4. What on earth has the day of Yahweh for you? 5. The Syrian bear is fiercer than the lion (cf. Daniel 7:5; II Kings 2:14; Lamentations 3:10). 6. Futile to expect to escape. 7. The three feasts at which every male had to appear (cf. Exodus 23:14, 17; 34:23; Deuteronomy 16:16). 8. Cf. Isaiah 11:3. Literally: "to smell," expressing the pagan notion that the gods delighted in the reek of the sacrifices (cf. Leviticus 36:31; Isaiah 11:3; Ephesians 5:2). 9. "Solemn assemblies"—the spring and harvest feasts (cf. Deuteronomy 16:8; Leviticus 23:36; Numbers 29:35; II Chronicles 7:9; Nehemiah 8:18), but covering all religious gatherings. 10. Remove a troublesome burden (cf. Isaiah 1:14).

- 24 But let justice roll down as waters and righteousness
25 as a perennial stream.¹ Did you bring Me sacrifices and
gifts (meal-offerings) those forty years in the wilderness,
26 O house of Israel?² So now you shall shoulder Sakkut
your king and Kewan the star of your god, your images
27 which you made for yourselves. Therefore I will send
you into exile far beyond Damascus;³ Yahweh, the God
of Hosts is His name, has spoken.⁴

1. Keynote or high-water mark of the book of Amos. The whole soul of Amos speaks (*cf.* Amos 5:7, 15; 6:12). This great prophetic message—parallels James 1:27 in the New Testament. 2. Answer: "No"—honeymoon period. 3. Pointing to Assyria. 4. Amos' great teaching against the empty ceremonialism can be traced through all the prophets: Hosea 6:6; Isaiah 1:10-17; Micah 6:6-8; Jeremiah 6:19, 20; 7:1-15; 21-23; Isaiah 66:2-4; I Samuel 15:22; Psalm 40:6-8; 50:13-15; 51:16; Proverbs 15:8; 21:27; Ecclesiastes 34:18; 35:11.

WOE TO THOSE WHO ARE AT EASE IN ZION

- 1 Woe to them who are at ease in Zion, who trust in the mountains of Samaria,¹ the distinguished men² of the chief of the nations, to whom the house of Israel
- 2 resort! Cross over to Kalneh³ and see, go from there to Great Hamath,⁴ then go down to Gath⁵ of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is
- 3 their territory greater than yours? You refuse to consider the evil day, causing the seat of violence to come near.
- 4 Who lie on beds of ivory and sprawl⁶ on their couches, and eat the fresh lambs out of the flock and fat calves
- 5 out of the midst of the stalls. Who purr to the sound of the harp⁷ and imagine themselves to be little Davids
- 6 by devising instruments of music. Who drink wine by bowlfuls,⁸ and anoint themselves with choice oils; but they are never grieved at the affliction of Joseph.
- 7 Therefore they shall go into exile at the head⁹ of the exiles, and the prating of the sprawlers shall cease.

1. Cf. Isaiah 32:9: first the ruling class in Judah, or Jerusalem, then the same class in Samaria, the Northern Capital. 2. The barons of England. 3. Cf. Genesis 10:10: in Isaiah 10:9 Arpad and Kalneh are mentioned together. 4. 150 miles north of Dan, on the Orontes, an independent kingdom (cf. II Samuel 8:9). The entering to Hamath, the pass between the Lebanons, the northern boundary of Israel (cf. II Kings 14:25)—often mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions. Destroyed in 740 B.C. by Tiglath-pileser IV; in 720 B.C. Sargon II overpowered it. 5. Sargon II took it in 711 B.C. 6. Looseness of gesture accompanies looseness of morals. To lie at the table was a luxurious custom recently introduced. Formerly they sat at table (cf. Genesis 27:19; Judges 19:6; I Samuel 20:5, 24). 7. Making a hurried flow of unmeaning words to the strumming of the harp. 8. Used for water to dash over the altar (cf. Exodus 27:3; I Kings 7:40; II Kings 12:3)—drinking to excess. 9. They shall retain their pre-eminence as the first—but to suffer.

THE COMPREHENSIVENESS OF THE JUDGMENT

- 8 The Lord Yahweh has sworn by Himself, Oracle of
Yahweh, the God of Hosts: I detest the pride of Jacob!
His palaces I hate and I will deliver up the city and
9 everything in it. If there be ten men left in one house
10 and they die, when a man's uncle and his undertaker
shall lift him up to take out his bones from the house,
and if he shall say to whoever is in the recesses of the
house, are there any more with You? He shall answer:
not one; then he shall say, Hush! It is not permitted to
11 mention the name of Yahweh. Now observe, Yahweh
has commanded and the destroyer will smite the great
house in fragments and the small house into splinters.
12 Can horses gallop on a cliff? Or the sea be ploughed by
oxen?¹ You have turned justice to gall² and the fruit
13 of righteousness to wormwood. You who rejoice at a
thing of nought, who say: Have we not taken to us
14 horns by our own strength? But look, I am raising
up³ against you, O house of Israel, Oracle of Yahweh,
the God of Hosts, a nation which will oppress you from
the entrance of Hamath⁴ to the waddy of Arabah!⁵

1. Hebrew: "Does one plow with oxen?" 2. "Poison"—"hemlock" in Hosea 10:4. 3. God is at work! 4. Northern boundary. 5. Southern boundary.

FIRST VISION: PLAGUE OF LOCUSTS

- 1 Thus the Lord Yahweh revealed¹ to me: Lo, He was forming a locust swarm² at the beginning of the growth of the spring crop. Lo, it was the spring crop³ after the
- 2 king's moving.⁴ When they had completely devoured the green vegetation of the earth, I said: O Lord Yahweh, forgive I pray! How can Jacob rise again? For he is
- 3 small! Yahweh repented⁵ concerning this. It shall not happen, said Yahweh.

SECOND VISION: FLAMING FIRE DEVOURING THE MIGHTY DEEP

- 4 Thus the Lord Yahweh revealed to me: Lo, the Lord Yahweh was calling a flaming fire, and it devoured the mighty deep⁶ and was about to devour the inheritance
- 5 (of Yahweh). Then I said: O Lord Yahweh stop I pray!
- 6 How can Jacob rise again? For he is small! Yahweh repented concerning this. This too shall not occur, said the Lord Yahweh.

THIRD VISION: THE PLUMBLINE

- 7 Thus He revealed me: Behold, the Lord standing by a wall (made) by a plumbline,⁷ with a plumbline in

1. Made me see: sent me a vision of (*cf.* vv. 4, 7; 8:1). 2. Locust in the larva stage when it is just hatched. 3. The quick development of the crops after the rains of March-April, in contrast with the verdure after the October rains. 4. A tribute levied on the spring herbage for the use of king's calvary (*cf.* I Kings 4:7; 18:5). 5. *Cf.* Exodus 32:12; Deuteronomy 32:36; Jeremiah 18:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 3:10. 6. Vast gathering of waters on which the earth as a disk was supposed to float; the source from which sprang the rivers and fountains (*cf.* Genesis 1:7; Exodus 20:4). 7. Formerly built to the line but now bowing and cracking. 8. Reveals the relationship between Yahweh and His prophets (*cf.* Exodus 33:12, 17; II Timothy 2:19). 9. An invading army.

- 8 His hand. Then Yahweh said to me: What do you see, Amos?⁸ So I answered, a plumbline. Then the Lord said: Look, I am setting a plumbline in the midst of
- 9 My people Israel; I will not again pass by them! The shrines of Isaac shall be desolate, the sanctuaries of Israel laid waste, and I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword.⁹

CLASSIC ENCOUNTER WITH AMAZIAH

- 10 Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, king of Israel, saying: Amos has conspired against you¹ in the (very) midst of the house of Israel, and the
11 country is not able to stand all his words.² Thus has Amos said: Jeroboam shall die by the sword³ and Israel
12 shall go into captivity from off his land. Then Amaziah said to Amos: Be gone, O seer, (or visionary)! Flee to Judah and there eat (earn) your bread!⁴ Prophecy there!
13 You shall no longer prophesy at Bethel, for this is the
14 king's sanctuary⁵ and his royal palace! Then answered Amos, saying to Amaziah: I am not a prophet, neither am I the son of a prophet.⁶ I am a shepherd and a
15 pincher of sycamores,⁷ but Yahweh took me from following the flock,⁸ and Yahweh said to me: Go, preach
16 to My people Israel! Now, therefore hear you the word of Yahweh! You say: Stop prophesying against Israel!
17 Do not preach against the house of Isaac! Therefore thus says Yahweh: Your wife shall be a harlot⁹ in the city; your sons and daughters shall fall by the sword; your estate shall be divided by line;¹⁰ you yourself shall die upon unholy soil; and Israel shall be completely exiled from his own country.

1. The dynasty of Jehu was established by a conspiracy of prophets. Now Jeroboam was a member of the dynasty who feared the prophets would overthrow him—but there is no indication that Amos had formed a plot.
2. The interested opponent of a reform always pleads his country's welfare.
3. Amos had only said: the house of Jeroboam would be cut off by the sword. 4. Literally: "eat"—implying that the prophet preached for money.
5. That is the perversion of state religion. 6. "I am no professional prophet and I am not a member of any prophetic guild." The founder of the purest type, of a new order or prophecy. 7. Grew 1000 feet above sea-level—fruit eaten by poor people. 8. Special brand of sheep. 9. Usually what happened in the capture of a city in ancient warfare (*cf.* Isaiah 13:16; Zechariah 14:21). 10. *Cf.* II Kings 17:24; Jeremiah 6:12; Micah 2:4.

FOURTH VISION: A BASKET OF SUMMER FRUIT

- 1 Thus the Lord Yahweh showed me: Lo, a basket of
 2 overly ripe fruit. Then He said to me: What do you
 see Amos? I answered: A basket of overly ripe fruit.¹
 Then Yahweh said to me: The end has come to My
 3 people Israel! I will not pass by them again! The songs
 of the Temple shall be howling in that day, Oracle of
 the Lord Yahweh. Multitudes of corpses! In every place,
 He has cast out! Hush!

REASONS FOR JUDGMENT

- 4 Listen to this: You who swallow up² the needy and over-
 5 run the common people. Saying, when will the new
 moon be over that we may sell corn? The Sabbath,³ that
 we may display wheat for sale? Making the ephah small,⁴
 the shekel great,⁴ tampering with balances of deceit!
 6 Purchasing the poor for silver, the needy for a pair of
 7 shoes⁵ and selling the refuse of the wheat. Yahweh has
 sworn by the pride of Jacob: I will never forget any of
 8 their acts. Shall not the earth quake because of this
 and every inhabitant mourn? It shall all rise up like
 the Nile and heave and sink like the river of Egypt.
 9 In that day, it shall come to pass, Oracle of the Lord
 Yahweh, I will cause the sun to go down at noon and
 darken the earth during broad daylight.⁶

1. Cf. the play on words in Jeremiah 1:11ff. 2. Or "who tread down" (cf. Psalm 56:1, 2; 57:3). 3. Regret to see the Sabbath shut down their business (cf. Numbers 28:11; II Kings 4:23; Hosea 2:11). 4. Ephah was about eight gallons, roughly equivalent to a modern bushel. They cheated two ways: gave short measure in selling the necessities of life and weighed the price to be paid against a weight that was too heavy. 5. Cf. Amos 2:6: the great lords bought up the poor for trifling sums, then sold them to dealers, who in turn sold them as slaves beyond their borders. 6. According to Oppolzer's chart there was a complete eclipse of the sun in Amos' lifetime, June 15, 763 B.C. It would be observable in Jerusalem—referred to in Assyrian annals. The eclipse, like the earthquake, is only an image.

- 10 I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; I will place sackcloth on every one's loins and baldness on every head.¹ I will make it like the mourning for an only son² and its end like a day of bitter sorrow.

FAMINE FOR THE WORD OF YAHWEH

- 11 Behold, the days are coming, Oracle of the Lord Yahweh, when I will send a famine in the earth, not a famine for bread nor a thirst for water, but for hearing the
12 words of Yahweh. They shall stagger from sea to sea and row even from the North to the East³ seeking the
13 word of Yahweh, but they will not find it. In that day the fair virgins and the young men shall faint for thirst.
14 Those who swear by the sin of Samaria⁴ and say: As your God lives O Dan, and, As the way of Beer-sheba lives,⁵ even they shall fall and never rise.

1. Two traditional mourning customs in Palestine. 2. Recalls the mourning in Egypt when Israel's glorious day began. 3. From the region of dark to the region of sunrise (*cf.* description of the land in Numbers 34:3-12). 4. The golden calf, probably at Bethel where Jeroboam seduced the people (*cf.* Hosea 8:5, 6; 10:5). 5. Not the manner of the Beer-sheba shrine but the road to it. A very startling expression, illustrated by Arab custom today. Arabs will swear "by the life of this fire or of this coffee." Moslems affirm their oaths by the sacred way to Mecca—so changeless is the East.

FIFTH VISION: JUDGMENT BEGINS AT THE HOUSE OF GOD

- 1 I saw the Lord standing over the altar¹ and He said: Smite² the capitals³ (of the pillars) until the threshold shake and break them in pieces on the heads of all of them. The last of them I will slay with the sword. Not one of them shall flee away, nor one of them escape.
- 2 If they break through to Sheol,⁴ from there My hand will take them; if they climb up to the heavens,⁴ from
- 3 there I will bring them down. If they hide in the top of Carmel, from there I will search them out and capture them; if they conceal themselves from My sight on the bottom of the sea, from there will I command
- 4 the serpent⁵ and he will bite them. And if they go into captivity before their enemies, there I will command the sword and it will slay them; and I have set My eye upon them for evil and not for good.

THE OMNIPOTENT AND OMNISCIENT ONE

- 5 For the Lord Yahweh of Hosts, He Who touches the land and it melts, and all its inhabitants mourn, also it rises like the river and sinks down like the river
- 6 of Egypt. He Who builds His terraces in the heavens, and His arched-dome He makes firm on the earth.⁶ He Who calls to the waters of the sea and pours them over the land, Yahweh is His name.

1. At Bethel, just where Jeroboam stood in I Kings 13:1. 2. The command is to the prophet. 3. Cf. Zephaniah 2:14: the capital of the pillar is to be smitten with such force that it trembles in its socket. The pillars supported the roof of the house. 4. The two opposite poles of space (cf. Job 11:8; 26:5; Ezekiel 32:18; Psalm 139:7). 5. Leviathan or tannin (cf. Isaiah 27:1). 6. Magnificent picture of the stored palaces of God, reaching terrace after terrace high into the sky, and all built up on the gigantic arch of the sky, whose foundations are firmly fixed on the solid earth.

GOD IS NO RESPECTER OF PERSONS

- 7 Are not you as the Ethiopians to Me, O you children of Israel? Oracle of Yahweh. Did I not bring up Israel out of the land of Egypt and the Philistines from
8 Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir?¹ Behold the eyes of the Lord Yahweh are upon the sinful kingdom and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth. Nevertheless I will not completely destroy the house of
9 Jacob.² Oracle of Yahweh. Observe! I am giving command and I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations of the earth like as (corn) is sifted to and
10 fro in a sieve! Not a grain³ falls! All the sinners of My people shall die by the sword, those who say: The calamity shall not reach nor threaten us.

THE EPILOGUE OF HOPE

- 11 In that day I will raise again the fallen tabernacle of David⁴ and repair its breaches; I will raise up his ruins
12 and I will rebuild it as in the former days,⁵ so that they may possess the remnant of Edom and all the nations upon whom My name has been, Oracle of Yahweh, He
13 will do this. Behold the days are coming, Oracle of Yahweh, that the plowman will overtake the reaper⁶ and the grape treader⁷ the sower of seed; the mountains

1. Yahweh has made all nations of the earth of one blood. 2. A remnant shall survive. A glorious future for the people of God. But Israel must first be purged—Gethsemane and Calvary must precede the resurrection! 3. Literally: "a pebble" (*cf.* II Samuel 17:13)—so Targum, Vulgate and Aquila; the LXX has here συντριμμα—fracture, ruin. 4. Evidently Messianic: "tabernacle"—"hut" or "tent," indicating that the stately palaces of David had been reduced very low (*cf.* Isaiah 1:8). 5. The Golden Age of the early monarchy. 6. Indication of the teeming seasons in the promise of Leviticus 26:5. 7. *Cf.* Judges 9:27; Nehemiah 13:15; Isaiah 62:2, 3; Jeremiah 25:30; 48:33: the crowning act of the agricultural year, while the sower of the seed is the opener of the year. The two, the Alpha and Omega of the year's fruitfulness, flow into one.

- shall drip with new wine and all the hills shall melt.
- 14 Also I will restore the fortune¹ of My people Israel, and they shall rebuild the desolate cities and dwell (in them) and plant vineyards and drink their wine, make
- 15 gardens and eat their fruits. And I will plant² them in their land, and they shall never again be uprooted from their land which I have given them, says Yahweh your God.³

1. Lead back the captives and restore the nation (*cf.* Hosea 11:10, 11). Phrase occurs eleven times in the roll of Jeremiah; three in Ezekiel; in Deuteronomy 30:3; Psalm 126:1, 4; Lamentations 2:14; Psalm 14:7; 53:7; Zephaniah 2:7; 3:20—occurring in some instances beyond the exile (586 B.C.).

2. The restored people are compared to trees themselves planted, not to be plucked up as in Psalm 1:3 (*cf.* II Samuel 7:10; Jeremiah 24:6; 42:10; 45:4; Hosea 2:23).

3. The closing oracle is a very rare, pleasant piece of music, as if the birds had come out after the thunderstorm, and the wet hills were glistening in the sunshine.

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

*The prophet Hosea prophesied from c. 750 B.C. to 734 B.C.
(maybe down to 722 B.C.) in the Northern Kingdom.*

THE BOOK OF HOSEA

Hosea I

The Prophet's Marriage

TITLE VERSE

- 1 The word of Yahweh which came to Hosea the son of Beeri,¹ during the days of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.²

MARRIAGE, WIFE AND CHILDREN

- 2 The beginning of the word of Yahweh to Hosea: Yahweh said to Hosea, Go, take you a wife of whoredom³ and children of whoredom, for the land has committed great whoredom in departing from Yahweh.
3 He went and took Gomer,⁴ the daughter of Diblaim,⁴
4 and she conceived and bore him a son. Then Yahweh said to him: Call his name Jezreel for in a little while I will visit the blood of Jezreel⁵ upon the house of Jehu and I will cut off the kingdom of the house of Israel.
5 And it shall come to pass in that day I will shatter the
6 bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel.⁶ She conceived again and gave birth to a daughter and He said to him: Name her Lo-Ruhamah [unloved or unpitied]⁷ for I will not again have pity on the house of Israel, in

1. "My well" (*cf.* I Chronicles 5:6: Beerah the Reubenite prince). The agricultural references in the book imply that the family was reared close to the soil. Jewish legend: Hosea died in Babylon and his body was carried back to Galilee and buried in Safed. 2. Hosea's dates: 750-734 (722 B.C.?). 3. Plural in the Hebrew signifying a woman of evil tendency, but chaste at the time of marriage. 4. Historical facts not allegorical meaning. 5. Literally: "Yahweh sows"—the door of Yahweh's mercy is rapidly closing. The immediate reference is II Kings 10:11: the slaughter of the house of Ahab carried out by Jehu at the command of Yahweh. 6. The classic battlefield of Israel. 7. Who ever knew a father's pity: "such pity as a father has unto his children dear" (Psalm 103:13), or Yahweh to a penitent man (Psalm 28:13). 8. In the East, three years.

- 7 which I will fully forgive them. But I will have pity upon the house of Judah and save them by Yahweh their God; I will not save them by bow, nor by sword, 8 nor by battle, nor by horses nor by horsemen. When she weaned Lo-Ruhamah,⁸ she conceived and bore a son.

- 9 He said: Call his name Lo-Ammi (not-My-people),¹ for
10 you are not My people, and I am not yours.² Yet the
number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand
of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered.
Afterwards in the place where it was told them: You
are not My people—it shall be told them: You are the
11 sons of the Living God. Also the children of Judah and
the children of Israel shall be gathered together and
they shall appoint for themselves one head³ and they
shall go up from the land for the day of Jezreel⁴ shall
be great.
2:1 Say to your brothers, Ammi; and to your sisters,
Ruhamah.

1. Indicates the complete rejection of the people. 2. V. 9 ends chapter one in the Masoretic Text. 3. Realized during the return of Zerubbabel and Christ (*cf.* Ezekiel 34:23, 24; 37:22). 4. The first-born of Hosea. This prophecy reverses the ominous names of his children: Jezreel means no longer the scene of massacre and threatened vengeance, but "God sows" (*cf.* Hosea 2:22). Lo-Ammi becomes Ammi; Lo-Ruhamah, Ruhamah—a woman who has been pitied.

THE HEART OF AGONY

- 2 Plead with your mother!¹ Plead, for she is not My wife
and I am not her husband. Let her put away her
whoredoms from her face, even her adulteries from
3 between her breasts. Lest I strip² her naked and set her
as in the day of her birth, make her as wilderness, set
4 her as a dry land and slay her with thirst.³ Yea, upon
her children⁴ I will be merciless, for they are children
5 of whoredom. For their mother played the whore, the
one conceiving them has behaved shamefully, in saying;
I will go after my paramours⁵ who give me my bread
6 and water, my wool and flax, my oil and drink. There-
fore look I will hedge up your way with thorns! Also
I will fence her in and she will not be able to find
7 her paths. She will chase her lovers but she will not
catch them; she shall seek them, but she will not find
them. Finally she will say: I will go back to my first
8 husband for I had a better time then than now.⁶ She
did not know that I⁷ gave her grain, wine, oil and
multiplied her silver and gold which they gave to Baal.⁸
9 Therefore I will take back My corn in its time and
My wine in its season; also I will snatch away My wool
and My flax which would have covered her nakedness.

1. The nation collectively. 2. Of wealth, population, land, etc. The punishment of an adulteress was stripping (*cf.* Ezekiel 16:38, 39). 3. As one in a parched desert (*cf.* Jeremiah 2:6). 4. Ones devoted to idolatry. 5. The Baals: away from her true and only husband. 6. Language doubtfully that of penitence; she is only casting about to be rid of her misery. 7. The true and only source of all good. 8. The grossest insult to Yahweh: they gave Yahweh's gifts to Baal. Gold and silver were used for making an image of Baal (*cf.* Isaiah 44:17, but II Chronicles 24:7 suggests a wider application).

- 10 Now I will reveal her lewdness¹ in the sight of her
lovers and no one shall deliver her out of My hand.
11 Also I will cause all her mirth to cease, her festivals,
her new moons, her sabbaths, even all her solemn
12 convocations.² I will make desolate her vines and fig
trees, of which she said: These are my hire that my
lovers gave me—I will make them a forest,³ the beasts
13 of the field shall devour them. Also I will visit upon
her the days of Baalim when she burned incense,
adorning herself with ear rings and jewels and going
after her lovers she forgot Me, Oracle of Yahweh.⁴

ISRAEL'S EXILE AND DISCIPLINE IN THE WILDERNESS

- 14 Therefore, look! I will allure her and bring her in the
15 wilderness and speak close to her heart.⁵ I will give
her vineyards and the valley of Achor⁶ for a doorway
of hope and she shall respond as in the days of her
youth just as in the day she came out of the land of
16 Egypt. Surely in due time, Oracle of Yahweh: You shall
17 call Me Ishi;⁷ you shall no more call Me Baali.⁸ Because

1. "Lightness," "folly," "vileness." 2. Baal-offerings cease when the harvests fail. 3. A wild place, unhedged, where fruit can not grow. 4. Their worship under the name of Yahweh, denied Him (*cf.* 1 Kings 8:2; 12:32; Judges 21:19). 5. *Cf.* Isaiah 40:1, 2. 6. "Trouble" (*cf.* Isaiah 65:10; Joshua 7:24): a rich pasture ground near Jericho, classed with Sharon. The valley through which Israel approached the promised land—where Achan was stoned. Again the anguish of exile and failure is to be the door of hope. 7. "My husband": term of endearment and of pleasant relations. 8. Baal was lord of the land in Phoenician religion. He held the land as a man held a woman whom he had bought and used. Israel had lowered her relation with Yahweh to this base connection—Yahweh was merely Baal. He will be to them, in their regeneration, husband. So in the New Testament fulfillment of this Christ is a bridegroom (*cf.* John 3:29), and the Church is the bride (*cf.* Revelation 21:9). Hosea foreshadows the great mystery of Ephesians 5:32.

I will remove from her mouth the names of Baalim, hence they shall not even remember their name.

- 18 Also in that day, I will make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground; I will shatter the bow, sword and war out of the land, and cause them to lie down in confidence.

ISRAEL'S REPENTANCE AND NEW TROTH

- 19 And I will betroth you to Myself forever—yea, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness, in judgment, in
20 loving-kindness and in mercies.¹ I will betroth you to
21 Me in faithfulness and you shall know Yahweh. Also it shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, Oracle of Yahweh, I will answer the heavens and they shall
22 answer the earth. And the earth will consume the grain,
23 wine and oil² and they will answer Jezreel.³ I will sow her to Me in the earth and I will have mercy toward her who has no mercy, and I will say to them which are not My people: You are My people and they will reply: Thou art My God!

1. The price Yahweh pays for His bride (*cf.* Genesis 24:53; 34:12 on purchase of bride). 2. Symbol of Yahweh's favor. 3. Not "Yahweh will scatter," but "Yahweh will plant" (*cf.* Ezekiel 11:20; Zechariah 13:9).

THE RESTORATION OF HOSEA'S WIFE

- 1 Then Yahweh said to me: Go and love again a woman
beloved of her paramour and an adultress¹ just as
Yahweh loved the children of Israel while they are
2 turning to other gods, and love raisin-cakes. Then I
purchased her to myself for fifteen pieces of silver and
3 one and one-half homers of barley.² Then I said to her:
You shall dwell alone with me many days; but you
shall not play the harlot and you shall not be for any
husband, so will I be toward you.

THE RESTORATION OF THE NATION

- 4 So the days shall be many when the children of Israel
shall abide without a king, prince, sacrifice, pillar,
5 ephod or teraphim. Afterwards the children of Israel
will turn and seek Yahweh their God and David their
king. Also they will come with fear to Yahweh and to
His goodness in the sequel of the days.³

1. Gomer had left her husband and become the mistress of another man. 2. All together the price of a slave. 3. Some indefinite future.

CONTROVERSY WITH ISRAEL

- 1 Listen to the word of Yahweh, you children of Israel!
 For Yahweh has a controversy¹ with the inhabitants of
 the land, because there is no truth, nor steadfast love
 2 nor knowledge of God in the land. Swearing,² and lying,
 and killing, and stealing and committing adultery³ they
 3 break out, and blood touches blood.⁴ Therefore the land
 shall mourn and everyone who dwells in it shall
 languish with the beasts of the field and the fowls of
 heaven; even the fish of the sea shall be removed.

FAILURE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

- 4 Yet, let no man contend, neither let any man reprove,
 for Thy people are as the ones contending with the
 5 priests.⁵ You shall stumble in the day and the prophet
 also shall stumble with you during the night and I will
 6 destroy your mother.⁶ My people are destroyed for the
 lack of knowledge.⁷ Because you have rejected knowl-
 edge I will also reject you from being a priest to Me;
 because you have purposely ignored the Law of your
 7 God, I will also forget your children. As they increased,
 so they sinned against Me;⁸ hence I will change their
 8 glory into shame. They eat⁹ on the sin of My people
 9 and set their soul on their iniquity.¹⁰ And it is like
 people, like priests!¹¹ I will punish them for their ways
 and reward them according to deeds.

1. A judicial ground of complaint: an accusation to make (*cf.* Micah 6:2).
 2. Blasphemous language. 3. Last six commandments (man's relation to
 man is broken)—result of v. 1. 4. One violent deed follows another. 5. Who
 will even resist the counsels and warnings of a priest. 6. In the Israelitish
 state, citizens are regarded as the children. 7. Ignorance of the true
 principles of religion. 8. Used their influence in accelerating the religious
 degeneracy of the people. 9. Seek their own advantage from the idolatries
 of the people. 10. Strive to encourage the people in their idolatry.
 11. Those who go astray and those who lead astray.

- 10 And they shall eat but not be satisfied; they shall play the harlot but not increase, because they failed to heed Yahweh.

THE BLINDING EFFECT OF SIN

- 11 Whoredom, wine and new wine¹ take away discern-
12 ment. My people consult their stock, then their staff²
reveals to them. The spirit of whoredom has caused
them to err and they have played the harlot before
13 their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the moun-
tains and burn incense upon the hills, under oak and
poplar³ or terebinth because of their good shadow;
therefore your daughters commit whoredom and your
14 brides commit adultery. I will not punish your
daughters when they play the harlot nor your brides
when they commit adultery, for they themselves run
with harlots and sacrifice with the common women of
the shrines! So the stupid people go down to ruin!

WARNING TO JUDAH

- 15 Though you, Israel, play the harlot, let not Judah bring
guilt on herself.⁴ Don't come to Gilgal,⁵ nor go to
16 Beth-aven,⁶ nor swear: As Yahweh liveth.⁷ For Israel

1. Drunkenness: such vicious self-indulgences always deprive men of their judgments and becloud their understandings (*cf.* Isaiah 28:1, 7, 8). 2. By which men divined. 3. One of the catkin-bearing group of trees—found by the waysides near villages or on the outskirts of towns—noted for its cool shade in the heat of the day. 4. Warning to Judah: don't be misled by your sister-kingdom. 5. Noted for the worship of idol gods (*cf.* Hosea 9:15; 12:11; Amos 4:5; 5:5). 6. Same as Bethel, where calf-worship was established. 7. Probable reference to Beer-sheba: well of oath. 8. Difficult to yoke or drive. 9. Irony: God will scatter them like sheep in a large country of Assyria. 10. Wholly devoted. 11. Cease attempting to restrain him, or *don't compromise!* 12. The storm-wind of divine judgment.

Hosea IV — Like People like Priest

- has behaved herself stubbornly, like a stubborn heifer⁸
—now Yahweh will feed them⁹ as a lamb in a large
17 place. Ephraim is wedded to his idols;¹⁰ leave him
18 alone!¹¹ When their drunkenness is over they take to
whoredom, her rulers have fallen in love with shame.
19 The wind¹² has wrapped her up in its wings and they
shall be ashamed of their sacrifices.

THE GUILT OF ISRAEL

- 1 Listen to this, O you priests, consider you house of Israel¹ and give ear O house of the king² for a sentence is upon you; because you have been a snare³ at Mizpah
 2 and a net spread upon Tabor. The revolvers are proficient in slaying, but I shall scourge them all.⁴
 3 I certainly know Ephraim⁵ and Israel is not hid⁶ from Me! Now Ephraim, you have played the
 4 harlot; Israel is defiled. Their deeds will not permit them to return to their God because the spirit of whoredom is within them and they cannot know
 5 Yahweh. The pride⁷ of Ephraim rises before his face, hence Israel and Ephraim shall stumble in their iniquity
 6 —Judah also will stumble with them. They shall come with their flocks and herds⁸ to seek Yahweh, but they shall not find Him⁹ for He has withdrawn from them.
 7 They have been unfaithful¹⁰ to Yahweh, for they have given birth to strange children; now let the new moon consume them with their fields.¹¹

JUDGMENT ON ISRAEL

- 8 Blow the cornet¹² in Gibeah¹³ and the trumpet¹⁴ in Ramah;¹⁵ sound an alarm in Beth-aven behind you,

1. The Northern Kingdom. 2. Royal court, including court officers.
 3. Spread to catch birds. 4. Yahweh conveyed warnings by His prophets.
 5. Have full understanding of all her willfulness and sin. 6. All-seeing eye (cf. Psalm 69:5). 7. Self-will or self-conceit. 8. Prepared to offer large and valuable sacrifices. 9. Day of grace has elapsed. 10. As a wife false to her husband. 11. Mouth's devouring; a speedy and sudden destruction.
 12. Literally: "bent back trumpet." 13. Four miles north of Jerusalem.
 14. Literally: "straight trumpet." 15. Two miles further north. Blowing of trumpet: summoning the tribes to repel the Assyrian invader.

- 9 O Benjamin. Ephraim shall become a waste in the day of rebuke¹ for I have made known among the tribes of
10 Israel what may be expected. The princes of Judah are like those who remove the landmark; I will pour out
11 My wrath upon them like water.² Ephraim is broken—he is crushed in judgment;³ because he is content to
12 follow after the command. Therefore I will be to Ephraim as a moth,⁴ as rottenness⁵ to the house of
13 Judah. When Ephraim saw his sickness⁶ and Judah, his wound, Ephraim went to Assyria and sent for King Jareb⁷ but he will not be able to heal you, neither can
14 he cure you of your wound.⁸ I will be to Ephraim as a lion⁹ and as a young lion¹⁰ to the house of Judah; I, even I, will tear, then go away, and there will be
15 no one to deliver. I will go¹¹ and return to My place,¹² till they realize their guilt and seek My face; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me.

1. Time when the sinner's doings are laid bare. 2. In full flood. 3. Delivered over to oppressors in Yahweh's just judgment. 4. To garments. 5. A worm to a wood. These are symbols of hidden decay—Yahweh's agents of destruction are secretly at work. 6. Political adversity. 7. Cf. II Kings 15:19: seeking alliances; "Jareb"—"King Pick a Quarrel," "King Bantam Rooster"; ready to enter a quarrel at the drop of a hat. 8. No political assistance could touch the national moral evils—the real cause of calamity. 9. Roaring and devouring. 10. Strong lion. 11. Waiting till judgment humbles her and she comes to her senses. 12. Cf. Isaiah 18:4 for Yahweh's place.

THE PEOPLE'S RETURN TO YAHWEH

- 1 Come and let us return to Yahweh;¹ even though He has torn,² He can heal us; He has wounded but He
- 2 can bind us up. After a couple of days³ He will revive⁴ us; on the third day He will raise us up again that we
- 3 shall live in His presence. Let us know; let us follow on⁵ to know Yahweh. His going forth is as certain as the morning and He will come to us like the winter rain,⁶ even as the spring rain⁶ watering the earth.

YAHWEH'S REPLY

- 4 O Ephraim, what shall I do to you? O Judah, what shall I do to you? For your goodness is as a morning cloud,⁷
- 5 as the dew that disappears early.⁸ Therefore I have cut them down by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth, and your judgments are as the
- 6 light⁹ flashing forth. For steadfast love¹⁰ I desire and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God more than burnt
- 7 offerings. But they like Adam have transgressed the
- 8 covenant. There they have betrayed Me. Gilead¹¹ is
- 9 a city of evildoers polluted with blood.¹² And as troops of robbers wait for victims, a gang of priests murder

1. Language of the humble and penitent. Prophet indicates what they will say by-and-by. 2. Admit judgment is chastisement from Yahweh. 3. Figure for a short period of time. 4. Quicken from the death of calamity. 5. The sign of thorough earnestness of purpose (*cf.* Deuteronomy 16:20; Psalm 34:14). 6. Rains fall in Palestine during two special periods: March and November. 7. Quickly dispelled by the sunshine. 8. Which evaporates with the warmth of the day. Bright the promise of innocent dawn, but the promise stays unfulfilled. 9. Resistless as the lightning. 10. *Cf.* I Samuel 15:22; Micah 6:6-8. 11. Probable reference to Ramoth-gilead, chief town in the hill country beyond Jordan—peculiarly licentious, hence taken as a representative. 12. *Cf.* I Kings 2:5; II Kings 15:25. 13. Or horrible thing: such an apostasy from Yahweh as cannot be mentioned without horror. 14. You have made yourself ripe for destruction.

- 10 on the way to Shechem. Yea, they have committed lewdness. In the house of Israel I have seen an unbelievable thing.¹³ There is whoredom in Ephraim; Israel is
- 11 spoiled. Also, O Judah, a pay day is appointed for you,¹⁴ when I restore the fortune of My people.

PICTURE OF ANARCHY

- 1 When I would have healed Israel,¹ then the iniquity of Ephraim² was discovered, also the wickedness of Samaria;³ for they practice falsehood, the entering of
 2 the thief, the spoiling of robbers⁴ without. They fail to consider in their hearts that I remember⁵ all of their wickedness; their own actions surround them;⁶ now
 3 they are before My face. They gladden the king with
 4 their wickedness and the princes with their lies. They are all adulterers, like an oven⁷ heated by the baker, who ceases to stir the fire from the kneading of the
 5 dough until it rises.⁸ On the day of our king⁹ the princes were drunk from the heat of wine—he joins
 6 hands with scoffers.¹⁰ For they have prepared their heart like an oven. While they lie in wait,¹¹ their baker sleeps all night; in the morning it blazes as a flaming fire.¹²
 7 They are all red hot as an oven, devouring their judges; all of their kings have fallen¹³ without one of them calling to Me.

1. Restore the prosperity of the nation. 2. Main tribe of the Northern Kingdom—around which the other nine clustered. 3. The capital and royal city, established by Omri (885-874 B.C.). 4. Showing the prevalence of the sins of violence—neither roads nor towns are safe. 5. I keep a record. 6. Ring of witnesses against them. 7. Figure of heated passion. 8. When he knows that it is well heated, he ceases from stirring it till the dough is leavened: an unclean heart is like an oven heated and unclean lusts and affection in it are as the fuel that makes it hot. 9. Either birthday or inauguration. 10. Encourages loose and worthless people at his court. 11. As a baker waits when his oven is hot and ready, these men wait to destroy the king when their plans are fully made. 12. Stirred up: flares forth into action. Circumstances seemed all ready then for action. 13. Cf. II Kings 15. 14. Mixed himself with the people—diluted his strength. 15. Raw on one side and burned to cinders on the other. 16. Cf. II Kings 13:7; 15:19, 20, 29 for the historicity of this statement. 17. Metaphor for unconscious decay. Arab proverb: "Your grey hairs are the publishers of your death."

THE PERILS OF YAHWEH'S PEOPLE

- 8 Ephraim, he pours himself out among the people!¹⁴
9 Ephraim is a half-baked cake!¹⁵ Strangers¹⁶ have devoured his strength and he is not aware of it! Even grey hairs are sprinkled here and there upon him¹⁷ and he does not know it!

EVIDENCES OF ISRAEL'S PLIGHT

- 10 The pride of Ephraim rises before his face, yet they have not returned to Yahweh their God, nor sought
11 Him in all of this. Ephraim is like a silly dove,¹ a dove without heart;² they cry to Egypt and then flit to
12 Assyria.³ As they go, I will throw over them My net;⁴ like a bird in the air I will bring them down. I will
13 punish them as their congregation has heard.⁵ Woe⁶ to them! For they have wandered from Me! Destruction to them! For they have rebelled against Me! While I would have redeemed them,⁷ they told falsehoods⁸
14 about Me. They did not cry to Me with their hearts; on the contrary, they howled⁹ upon their beds, and assembled themselves for corn and new wine, and rebelled against Me. Although I bound and strengthened
15 their arms,¹⁰ yet they devise mischief against Me. They return, but not to the Most High; they are like a deceitful bow.¹¹ Their princes shall fall by the sword because of the rage¹² of their tongue—this shall be their scorn in the land of Egypt.

1. Arab proverb: "There is nothing more simple than a dove." 2. Inability to manage for itself so as to preserve itself from evil. 3. Flitting back and forth from Assyria to Egypt for help against the other. 4. Symbol of destruction. 5. In the Pentateuch (*cf.* Leviticus 26:14-39; Deuteronomy 28:15-16) and prophets (*cf.* II Kings 17:13, 14). 6. *Cf.* Isaiah 3:9; Jeremiah 13:27. 7. Out of Egyptian slavery. 8. *Cf.* Romans 1:25. Pretending to be Yahweh worshipers when all the while they worshiped idols. 9. *Cf.* Jeremiah 3:9, 15; 6:6, 7. Bemoaned their calamities as sick men bewail upon sick-beds. 10. Instructed them—figure: a surgeon's bending to strengthen the sinews. 11. A slack bow (*cf.* Psalm 78:57); an ill-contrived bow which never directs the arrow to the mark. 12. *Cf.* Psalm 78:9.

INVASION COMING AS JUDGMENT FOR SIN

- 1 (Place) the trumpet to your mouth.¹ As an eagle² (He comes) against the house of Yahweh! They have broken My covenant and against My Law they have rebelled.
- 2 They will cry³ to Me: My God, we know Thee, we
- 3 Israel! Israel has spurned the good;⁴ the enemy must pursue him.

LEAVING YAHWEH OUT OF POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

- 4 They crowned kings, but not from Me; they made princes, which I did not know. They manufactured for themselves idols with their silver and gold⁵ only that
- 5 they may be cut off.⁶ He has cast off your calf,⁷ O
- 6 Samaria; My anger burns against them. How much longer can they pretend innocence? For even this is from Israel:⁸ The workman made it,⁹ but it is no God! Yea, the calf of Samaria shall be shattered into bits.¹⁰
- 7 For they sow to the wind and the whirlwind they will reap.¹¹ He has no standing corn,¹² and the bud yields
- 8 no meal; if it did, strangers¹³ would devour it. Israel is swallowed up¹⁴—they are among the nations as a

1. Give notice of the approaching judgment. 2. Swiftly and fiercely: distinguished both for rapidity of flight and for the far-off perception of its prey. 3. They use right language, but their hearts and actions are far from right. They honor Him with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him. 4. "Sunum Bonum" of life: service of God, which alone is true and good (*cf.* Psalm 119:68). 5. Abusing their wealth to idolatry. 6. Rushing headlong to their own destruction. 7. Idolatry of Israel began with Jeroboam I (931-910 B.C.). 8. He himself made the idol which he calls his god. 9. Frequent scornful expression of the prophets. 10. Literally: "for chips for firing." 11. Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. 12. Harvest fails. 13. Foreign enemies. 14. So absorbed by other nations as never again to have a separate national existence. 15. Lonely and willful, forcing its own way and swayed only by passion. 16. Paid her foreign allies and helpers.

- 9 worthless vessel. They have gone up from Assyria like a
10 runaway wild ass.¹⁵ Ephraim has hired¹⁶ lovers! Though
they are scattered among the nations, I will collect them
when they begin to sorrow a little because of the burden
of the kings and princes.

- 11 Ephraim has multiplied altars for sin, the altars have
12 been to him for sin.¹ Were I to write² in My Law
multitudes of instructions for him, they would be re-
13 garded as a strange thing. They slay My burnt offerings,
sacrifice flesh³ and eat it; Yahweh does not accept them.
Now He must remember their iniquity and punish
14 their sins; they shall return to Egypt.⁴ For Israel has
forgotten his Maker and built palaces. Likewise Judah
has multiplied walled cities; but I will send fire⁵ upon
his cities and devour his castles.

1. As ground of punishment—multiplicity of altars was plain and open proof of idolatry. 2. So that all may know them (*cf.* Deuteronomy 4:6, 8). 3. Mere flesh: they do not put their hearts into their sacrifices. 4. Not literally: going into Egypt became a proverbial expression of extreme misery. 5. Frequent image of Yahweh's judgment.

THE HUMBLING NATION AT GILGAL

- 1 Rejoice not, O Israel,¹ with joy like the heathen, for you have played the harlot before your God. You have
 2 loved a harlot's hire on every grainfloor. The threshing-floor and the winepress² cannot feed them and the new
 3 wine will disappoint her. They shall not dwell³ in the land of Yahweh, but Ephraim will return to Egypt and
 4 in Assyria they will eat unclean food.⁴ They will not pour out to Yahweh wine,⁵ neither will they be acceptable to Him. Their sacrifices will be as mourner's bread⁶ to them; all who eat it shall be defiled because it is for their own use. It will not be brought into
 5 Yahweh's house.⁷ What will you do on the day of solemn
 6 convocation? Or during Yahweh's festivities? For lo, they go away for destruction,⁸ but Egypt shall gather them in, Memphis,⁹ bury them;¹⁰ thistles¹¹ inherit their
 7 jewels of silver, thorns (come up) in their tents. The days¹² of recompence are here, even the days of requital—Israel will know it! The prophet is a fool!¹³ The man of the spirit is mad!¹³ Because of the mass of your iniquity and multiplied treachery.

1. Addressed to the people probably at harvest thanksgiving time. 2. Vat into which the juice of the grapes was pressed. 3. Permanently abide. 4. Such as meat offered to idols. 5. "Pour out as a libation" (*cf.* Exodus 30:9; Leviticus 23:13). 6. Regarded as unclean (*cf.* Deuteronomy 26:14; Jeremiah 16:7; Exodus 24:17). 7. Their bread is for their own seed, for their own self-indulgence, not for Yahweh's glory. 8. From the devastation. 9. Noph: capital of lower Egypt. 10. Together with its idol cats, birds and bulls—what a strange disgrace for the people of Yahweh. 11. Sign of desolation. 12. Times of divine judgment. 13. A sign of judgment: a judicial blindness on the part of the national leaders.

- 8 Ephraim was a watchman¹ for my God. The prophet² is a fowler's snare in all his ways—enmity in the house
9 of his God. As in the days of Gibeah,³ they have acted corruptly. He (Yahweh) will remember their iniquity and recompense their sins.

CORRUPTION THROUGH LUST

- 10 Like grapes⁴ in the wilderness, I found Israel; like the first ripe fig⁵ on a fig tree at the first of the season, I saw your fathers. But when they came to Baal-peor⁶ they dedicated themselves to the shameful thing,⁷ becoming
11 abominable like the object of their love. Ephraim's glory will fly away like a bird⁸—without birth, or womb
12 or conception. If they rear children, I will bereave them—there shall be no man left.⁹ Yea, woe to them when
13 I depart!¹⁰ Ephraim, just as I saw Tyre,¹¹ is planted in a pleasant place; but Ephraim shall deliver up her
14 children to the slaughterer. Give them, O Yahweh! What shalt Thou give? Give them a miscarrying womb
15 and dry breasts. All their wickedness is in Gilgal,¹² for there is where I despised them; because of their wicked acts, I will drive them out of My house.¹³ I will cease loving them, for all of their princes are revolvers.¹⁴

1. True prophet. 2. False prophet—who is only a snare and deceiver. 3. Cf. Judges 19:16-22. 4. A traveler in the wilderness is delighted to quench his thirst with. 5. A great delicacy in the East. 6. Cf. Numbers 25:3. 7. "Besheth," a nickname for Baal: cf. Jerubbaal called Jerub-besheth, II Samuel 11:21. 8. Or a flock of birds. 9. An entire riddance shall be made of them and their posterity. 10. Withdrawing My protection and favor. 11. Cf. Ezekiel 27:3. 12. The principal focus of idolatrous worship. 13. Or land, or dwelling place. 14. Play on words: their "sarehem" or "sorerim." 15. With blight. 16. Having no more a settled and permanent home (cf. II Kings 15:29; II Chronicles 5:26).

Hosea IX — Doom of Israel

- 16 Ephraim is smitten;¹⁵ their root is dried up; they shall bear no fruit. Even if they should bring forth, I will
17 slay the beloved fruit of their womb. My God will cast them out, because they failed to obey Him. They shall be vagabonds among the nations.¹⁶

PUNISHMENT OF ISRAEL'S GUILT

- 1 Israel is a luxuriant vine¹ which bears his fruit. Accord-
 ing to the abundance of his fruit he has multiplied his
 altars; according to the goodness of his land he made
 2 his goodly images.² Their heart is divided³—now⁴ they
 will be pronounced guilty. He shall break the necks of
 3 their altars and spoil their pillars. For now they are
 saying: We have no king⁵ but we do not fear Yahweh,
 4 and the king—what can he do for us? They speak
 (empty) words, swearing falsely in making covenants.
 Therefore judgment springs up as hemlock⁶ in the
 5 furrows of the field. The dwellers of Samaria shall be
 anxious over the calves of Beth-aven⁷ for the people
 shall mourn over it; also the priests⁸ who rejoice over
 6 its glory, it shall depart from them. Yea, himself they
 shall pack to Assyria; he shall be offered as a present
 to King Jareb.⁹ Ephraim will be ashamed and Israel
 7 will be embarrassed over his counsel. As for Samaria,
 8 her king is cut off as foam¹⁰ upon the waters. The high
 places also of Aven,¹¹ the sin of Israel, shall be destroyed;
 the thorn and thistle shall spring upon their altars.
 Also they shall cry to the mountains: Cover us¹² and to
 the hills fall on us.

1. One bearing no fruit, one emptying itself, spreading itself, in growth and fruitage, but all to idols—not to Yahweh. 2. Cf. Hosea 2:8; 8:4. 3. Between Yahweh and idols (cf. I Kings 18:21; Matthew 6:24; James 4:8). 4. Speedily. 5. An interregnum, a time of anarchy, between the murder of Pekah and the settlement of Hoshea on the throne—a period of eight or nine years. 6. Cf. Deuteronomy 29:18. 7. I.e., “Bethel”—the house of God, which has become “Beth-aven”—the house of vanity or idols. 8. “Chemarim”—probably idolatrous priests (cf. II Kings 23:5; Zephaniah 1:4). 9. Cf. Hosea 5:13. 10. A wave, stripped off by the wind—a strong, contemptuous figure. 11. Vanity, iniquity, here for calf idol. 12. Seeking death as a relief from their misery and shame (cf. Luke 23:30; Revelation 6:16; 9:6).

DEATH AND DESTRUCTION

- 9 From the days of Gibeah,¹ you have sinned, O Israel.
There they remained! The battle against the children
10 of iniquity should not overtake them in Gibeah. In My
pleasure, I will punish them while they are wrapped
11 around their two transgressions.² Ephraim is a trained
heifer who loves to tread the grain,³ but I have lighted
on her fair neck.⁴ I have yoked Ephraim⁵—Judah shall
12 plow;⁶ Jacob shall crush his clods. Sow for yourselves⁷
in righteousness, reap mercy. Break up your fallow
ground⁸ for it is time to seek Yahweh, till He come
13 and shower righteousness⁹ upon you. You have plowed
wickedness,¹⁰ you have reaped disaster; you have eaten
the fruit of lies because you trusted in your way, in the
14 multitude of your strong men. Therefore a tumult shall
arise among your people and all of your fortresses will
be destroyed, as Shalman spoiled Beth-arbel¹¹ in the day
of battle. The mother shall be dashed in pieces upon
15 the children. So shall Bethel do to you because of your
wickedness. The king of Israel shall be completely cut
off at daybreak.

1. Cf. Hosea 9:9. 2. Two calves at Dan and Bethel. 3. Of which she may feed at her pleasure. 4. To put her under the yoke and bring her into subjection to her enemies. 5. The Assyrian to ride upon Ephraim. 6. Hard, toilsome work. 7. Employ yourselves in works which will bring good fruitage. 8. Remove your superstitions and your vices or "plough for yourselves fresh soil!" 9. Cf. Psalm 72:6; Isaiah 45:8. 10. Cf. Job 4:8. 11. Cf. II Kings 18:34; 19:13. Arbela was among the towns which joined Assur-day-anpal, son of Shalmaneser, in his revolt against his father. Its capture and sack left a lasting impression. Arbela was chiefly noted for its great temple of the goddess Istar (Ashtoreth).

LOVE'S ELECTION

- 1 When Israel was just a lad,¹ I fell in love with him and
- 2 I called My son out of Egypt.² As they called³ them,
the further they went from them;⁴ they sacrificed to
- 3 Baalim⁵ and burned incense to graven images. But I, on
My part, taught Ephraim how to walk;⁶ I took them on
My arm, but they did not know that I healed them.⁷
- 4 With the cords of a man⁸ I kept on drawing them, even
with the bands of love. I was to them as the ones taking
the yoke from off their jaws;⁹ and I placed meat before
them.

LOVE'S DISCIPLINE

- 5 He will not return to the land of Egypt,¹⁰ but the
Assyrian will be his king; because they refused to
- 6 return.¹¹ And the sword will fall¹² upon his cities, con-
sume his bars¹³ and devour them, because of their
- 7 counsels.¹⁴ My people are accustomed¹⁵ to backsliding
from Me; although they call to the One on High, none
of them exalt Him.

LOVE'S AGONY

- 8 How¹⁶ can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I
deliver you, O Israel? How can I make you as Adamah?¹⁷
How can I set you as Zeboim?¹⁷ My heart is torn within
Me! My compassions are kindled together!

1. Referring to patriarchal times a nation in its infant beginning. 2. Re-
calling the greatness of their deliverance. 3. The prophets sent by Yahweh.
4. Turned away, avoiding their advisors. 5. Plural: various forms under
which Baal was worshiped. 6. As a father patiently teaches a child how
to walk. 7. Purposed correction and training by My dealings with them.
8. Cf. Song of Songs 1:4: with persuasions a man might use with his fellow
man. 9. When the yoke galled the neck, they were lifted forward toward
the jaws. 10. Previously the prophet spoke of such return mystically (cf.
Hosea 8:13; 9:3). 11. In penitence to Yahweh. 12. Literally: "light upon"
or "whirl down on." 13. Defenders. 14. Seeking idols, and thinking to
rely on Egypt. 15. Fully inclined and purposed. 16. Expression of strong
reluctance and deep pain. 17. Cf. Genesis 19:24; Deuteronomy 29:23.

LOVE'S VICTORY

- 9 I will not go the limit of fierceness of My anger;¹ I will not completely destroy Ephraim. For I am God and not man! The Holy One in your midst! I will not enter the
10 city. They will follow after Yahweh,² Who shall roar³ like a lion; for when He roars, the children shall come
11 trembling from the West. They shall come trembling as a bird⁴ out of Egypt and as a dove out of the country of Assyria; and I will cause them to live in their houses,⁵
12 Oracle of Yahweh. Ephraim⁶ surrounds Me with falsehood and the house of Israel with deceit; but Judah⁷ yet rules with Yahweh and is faithful to the Holy One.

1. Yahweh will not act as a man in uncontrolled rage; but, with divine wisdom and goodness, He will order penalty for corrective purpose. 2. By-and-by, in the days of restoration after chastisement. 3. An image intimating a voice, heard afar. 4. Or fly hastily as a flock of birds. 5. Cf. the habit of migratory birds which return year by year to the same spot. 6. Ten Northern Tribes. 7. The kingdom of the two tribes which remained faithful to Yahweh.

JUDAH IS EQUALLY GUILTY

- 1 Ephraim feeds on the wind¹ and follows after the east wind;² he continually multiplies lies³ and destruction—making a covenant with Assyria and carrying oil into
2 Egypt.⁴ Also Yahweh has a controversy⁵ with Judah and will punish Jacob⁶ according to his ways—in accordance to his works He will recompense him.

THREE INCIDENTS IN JACOB'S LIFE

- 3 In the womb he seized his brother by the heel;⁷ but in
4 his manhood he had power with God.⁸ Yea, he had power over the angel⁹ and prevailed; weeping¹⁰ and petitioning Him, he encountered Him at Bethel¹¹ and
5 there He spoke with us. Even Yahweh, the God of
6 Hosts—Yahweh is His memorial.¹² Therefore turn you¹³ to your God; keep mercy and judgment and wait continually on your God.¹⁴

1. Proverbial expression, signifying labor in vain. 2. Blighting and desolating: a figure indicating idol helps and national alliances, which Israel sought. 3. By which they deceive themselves. 4. As a present to win favor and protection—olive oil does not thrive in Egypt. 5. Charges to urge against. 6. Representing the entire nation descended from him. 7. Cf. Genesis 25:26: a symbol of his spirit as the "supplanter." 8. Cf. Genesis 32:24. 9. Yahweh in human form for a man's apprehension. 10. Not in the Genesis account. 11. Cf. Genesis 35:9, 10. 12. Cf. Exodus 3:15: a name which is also a remembrance of the great characteristic of the being spoken of. 13. From willfulness and idolatry back to God. 14. Cf. Micah 6:8. 15. A play on the double sense of the Hebrew word "Canaan"—a Canaanite, and a merchant, a nation of traffickers. 16. Cf. Amos 8:5; Micah 6:11. 17. Tries to persuade himself that he cannot be bad, as the prophets charge—and attempts to placate his conscience. 18. Cf. Leviticus 23:42ff.: Yahweh is the only source of true prosperity—only in His way and time can true success come.

ISRAEL'S UNHOLY AMBITION RESULTS IN

BITTER DISAPPOINTMENT

- 7 Canaan¹⁵ is he! The balances of deceit¹⁶ are in his hands!
8 He loves to take advantage! . . . Ephraim said: Surely, I
am become rich!¹⁷ I have accumulated for myself wealth;
in all My works they can not find in Me iniquity, which
9 is sin. But I am Yahweh your God from the land of
Egypt, yet I will cause you to dwell again in tents as
in the days of the solemn feast.¹⁸

- 10 I have also spoken to the prophets and I multiplied
visions and through the ministry of the prophets I used
11 similitudes.¹ Is Gilead² iniquity? They are altogether
vain—in Gilgal³ they sacrifice oxen; their altars are
12 no better than heaps in the furrows of the field. Jacob
fled⁴ in the field of Aram, and Israel served⁵ for a wife,
13 keeping sheep for a wife. By a prophet⁶ Yahweh brought
Israel up out of Egypt and by a prophet he was pre-
14 served. Ephraim has provoked to bitter anger; therefore
his blood shall be left upon him⁷ and his Lord shall
return his reproach upon him.

1. Companions, parables, types: an ancient custom in the Eastern world to convey instructions by symbols and sacred hieroglyphics. Pythagoras learned this method in his travels in the East, conversing with the Jews and other wise men. 2. East of Jordan. 3. West of Jordan—together representing the whole country. 4. Cf. Genesis 28:5. 5. Cf. Genesis 29:20, 22. 6. Cf. Exodus 12:50, 51; 13:2. 7. His blood-guilt to bring down on him the merited punishment.

ISRAEL'S REBELLION HIS OWN DEATH WARRANT

- 1 When Ephraim spoke there was fear.¹ He exalted himself in Israel. When he transgressed in Baal, he died.
- 2 Now they sin again and again, making themselves molten images of silver, even idols after their own understanding—all of them the product of craftsmen. They speak of them: Let the men who sacrifice kiss the
- 3 calves.² Therefore they shall be like the morning cloud,³ like the dew that disappears early,³ like the chaff⁴ that whirls up from the threshing floor and like the smoke from the chimney.⁵

LOVE—INGRATITUDE—DESTRUCTION

- 4 Yet I am Yahweh your God from the land of Egypt.⁶ You shall know no God but Me, and other than Me
- 5 there is no Saviour. I knew you⁷ in the wilderness, in
- 6 the land of extreme drought. They were filled according⁸ to their pasture; as they were filled, their heart
- 7 was exalted, therefore they forgot Me. So I will be as a lion to them; as a leopard,⁹ I will watch by the road-
- 8 side. As a bear robbed of her young,¹⁰ I will fall on them and tear the caul¹¹ of their heart. There I will devour them like a lion—wild beasts shall rend them.

1. Fortified his position and influence as the ruling tribe. For the pre-eminency of the tribe Ephraim: *cf.* Genesis 49:26; Deuteronomy 33:17; Judges 8:1; 12:1. 2. *Cf.* I Kings 19:18: an act of adoration to the golden calves. 3. These, in the East, suddenly and utterly vanish when the sun arises (*cf.* Daniel 2:35; Hosea 6:4). 4. *Cf.* Psalm 1:4; 35:5; Isaiah 17:13. 5. Or lattice work placed under the wall-plate of the roof. 6. *Cf.* Isaiah 43:11. 7. An expressive statement: "It was indeed I who did it"—I took special care of you in the long wilderness-time. 8. The more care I took of them, the more perversely they acted toward Me. 9. Leopards lurk in thickets and spring on their victims. 10. She-bear, in the time of her most dangerous irritation. 11. Or chamber: the "pericardium"—the membrane enclosing the heart.

ISRAEL'S GUILT DESERVES UTTER DESTRUCTION

- 9 To your own destruction, O Israel, but in Me is your
10 help. Where is your king now? Let him save you in
all your cities! And your judges, of whom you said:
11 Give me a king and princes? I gave you a king in My
12 anger¹ and took him away in My wrath. The iniquity
13 of Ephraim is bound up;² his sin is stored up. Birth
pangs³ shall seize him, but he is a foolish son. For this
is no time to stand at the place of the breaking forth
14 of children. I will ransom them from the hand of Sheol;
I will redeem them from death—O death, where are
your plagues? O Sheol, where is your destruction?⁴
15 Repentance⁵ shall be hid from My eyes. Though he be
fruitful among his brothers, an east wind shall come,
the breath of Yahweh rising from the wilderness, drying
up his fountain and parching his spring and stripping
16^o the treasure of all its precious jewels. Samaria must bear
her guilt, for she rebelled against her God. They shall
fall by the sword; their infants shall be dashed in pieces
and their women with child shall be ripped up (with
the sword).

1. Cf. I Samuel 8:5; 15:23; 16:1. 2. Laid by in store and will surely be remembered and punished. 3. Great calamities are often likened to the pangs of childbirth. 4. Cf. I Corinthians 15:55: these strong figures signify that, though a hopeless and desperate condition, in due time, Yahweh will deliver them out of it. 5. Change of mind and purpose respecting your recovery and restoration. 6. In the Masoretic Text, verse one of chapter fourteen.

CALL TO REPENTANCE

- 1 O Israel return¹ to Yahweh, your God, for you have
 2 fallen² by your own iniquity. Take with you words³
 and return to Yahweh! Say to Him: Remove all iniquity
 and accept good,⁴ for we will offer the fruit of our lips.⁵
 3 Asshur⁶ cannot save us—we will not ride on horses⁷—
 neither will we say to the works of our hands: (You are)
 our gods. For in Thee the fatherless finds mercy.⁸

RESULT OF TRUE REPENTANCE

- 4 I will heal their backsliding;⁹ I will love them freely;¹⁰
 5 For My anger is turned away from them. I will be as
 the dew¹¹ to Israel. He will blossom as the lily¹² and
 6 shoot forth his roots as Lebanon.¹³ His branches shall
 spread and his beauty shall be as the olive tree¹⁴ and
 7 his smell¹⁵ as Lebanon. They shall return and dwell in
 His shadow; its scent¹⁶ shall be as the wine of Lebanon.
 They shall revive¹⁷ (as) the corn and blossom as the
 8 vine. Ephraim (will say): What have I to do any more
 with idols? I have answered and will respect Him. I am
 9 like a green fir tree; in Me is your fruit found. Who is
 wise, and understands these things? Intelligent, he shall
 know them. Right are the ways of Yahweh and the just
 shall walk in them, but sinners shall stumble in them.

1. Return quietly to your Yahweh. 2. Into all your troubles, as a direct consequence of your sins (*cf.* Hosea 13:9). 3. Not formal sacrifice, but penitent confessions and prayers. 4. Literally: "give good!" 5. *Cf.* Hebrews 13:5; praises of our lips. 6. Israel had been in an alliance. 7. The type of Egypt, from whence the horses had first been brought. 8. *Cf.* Psalm 10:14; 68:5. 9. Which needs healing, because it is a sure sign of spiritual disease: wrongness of heart. 10. With spontaneous, overflowing generosity. 11. *Cf.* Job 29:19; Proverbs 19:12; Micah 5:7. 12. Probably the scarlet lily, growing as freely as our poppy in the fields. No plant is more productive than the lily, one root often producing fifty bulbs. 13. Cedars of Lebanon. 14. Never loses its leaves (*cf.* Judges 9:9; Psalm 52:8; 128:3; Jeremiah 11:16). 15. The fragrance of the cedars noticed by travelers. 16. Renown. 17. Corn refreshed by rain.

THE BOOK OF MICAH

*The prophet Micah began prophesying c. 735 B.C.
in the Southern Kingdom.*

THE BOOK OF MICAH

Micah I

Judgment Upon Samaria and Judah

TITLE VERSE

- 1 The word of Yahweh which came to Micah,¹ the Morashite,² in the days of Jotham,³ Ahaz⁴ (and) Hezekiah,⁵ kings of Judah, which he saw⁶ concerning Samaria⁷ and Jerusalem.⁷

MESSAGE OF JUDGMENT

- 2 Listen, all you people;⁸ give attention, O earth, and her fulness! Let the Lord Yahweh be a witness against you—
3 even the Lord from His Holy Temple.⁹ For, behold, Yahweh is going forth from His Habitat, and He will descend and tread upon the high places of the earth.
4 The mountains will melt under Him and the valleys will gape open, like wax before fire, yea, like water

1. Same as Micaiah (*cf.* I Kings 22:28): "Who is like Yahweh?"; a very common name in the Old Testament (*cf.* Judges 17). 2. "Micah of Moresheth-Gath" (v. 14), most southerly township in Judah—located in the Shephelah. It was located *c.* seventeen miles from Tekoa (Amos' birthplace) and *c.* 1,000 feet above the Mediterranean Sea, on a plain through which ran the great road so often traveled by the Egyptian and Assyrian armies. 3. 740-735 B.C. 4. 734-727 B.C. 5. 727-698 B.C. 6. A word denoting inward perception of facts under the influence of the spirit of the Eternal: a prophetic truth often termed a vision (*cf.* Isaiah 1:1; Obadiah 1; Nahum 1:1). 7. Micah possessed equal concern for both kingdoms: one crashing in ruin; the other flirting with fire. 8. Gentiles as well as the Israelites (*cf.* Amos 1:2). 9. His heavenly dwelling place (*cf.* Isaiah 18:4; Psalm 11:4; Habakkuk 2:20; Zechariah 2:13).

- 5 poured over a fall.¹ Because of the transgression of Jacob is all of this² and on account of the sins of the house of Israel.³ What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria?⁴ What is the sin⁵ of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem? Then I will make Samaria as a ruinous heap in the field⁶ and as vineyard terraces;⁷ I will pour down her stones into the valley and expose her foundations.⁸
- 7⁹ Also all her images¹⁰ shall be shattered and all her hires¹¹ will be burned by fire; and all her idols will I destroy, for by the hire of harlot¹² they were collected,¹³ and to a harlot's hire they shall return.

1. Image of a theophany: Yahweh in a storm (*cf.* Psalm 18). Under the foot of Yahweh coming in judgment the hills melt like wax—valleys split asunder as if they were a sheet of falling water which is parted by every jutting rock (*cf.* Judges 5:5; Psalm 68:2; Isaiah 64:1; Habakkuk 3:6). 2. The theophany in v. 4. 3. *Cf.* Amos 6:13. 4. Samaria is personified: the sinner is indicated, the sin incarnate—Samaria the epitome of Northern Kingdom: all sin piled up in her. 5. Hebrew: "high places"; LXX and other versions: "sin." 6. A perfect picture of desolation: the stones of the temples and palaces of Samaria will be carefully removed from the rich soil, thrown together in heaps, built up in the rude walk of terraces and rolled down in the valley below. 7. When the city is in ruin the vines will grow on the old site. 8. Precisely the way Herod's Samaria lies today. 9. This passage is definitely dated before 722 B.C., the fall of Samaria. 10. With the devastation of the city goes the ruin of powerless idolatry (*cf.* Isaiah 2:20; 30:22; 31:7). 11. Offerings of the idol shrines are regarded as the rewards of prostitution. 12. *Cf.* Hosea 2:7; Joel 3:3: wealth accumulated by unclean religious rites of the temple—slaves (*cf.* Deuteronomy 23:17, 18) siezed by the Assyrians, will be returned to heathen temples in another land of similar unclean methods. 13. Reading of Targum, Peshitto and Vulgate.

GRIEF OVER THE DEVASTATION OF JUDAH

- 8 On account of this I will mourn, I will wail, I will go barefoot¹ and stripped (of my robe); I will mourn like the jackals with the mourning of the daughters of desert.² For her wound is incurable,³ for it has come to Judah; it even reaches to the gate of My people, even to Jerusalem.⁴
- 10⁵ Declare⁶ it not in Gath.⁷
Weep not in Acco.⁸
In the house of Aphrah⁹ roll yourself in dust.
- 11 Pass over, O inhabitress of Shaphir,¹⁰ your shame is uncovered!
The inhabitress of Za'anani¹¹ shall not go forth.
The mourning of Beth-ezel¹² exacts from you its toll.
- 12 The inhabitress of Morath¹³ trembles for good, for calamity has descended from Yahweh even to the gate of Jerusalem.

1. Prophet is speaking: a sign of mourning (*cf.* II Samuel 15:30; Isaiah 20:2). 2. That is: the owls, or ostriches. *Cf.* Arabic: wa'ana: "white, barren ground." The Arabs call the ostrich "father of the desert" (Abu Sahara). The gruesome groans of these great birds are well known. 3. LXX and Syriac: "stroke is desperate." 4. Micah sees the approach of Assyrian king to the capital. 5. Vv. 10-16: a series of curious puns on the names of towns. 6. One translation: "Tell it not in Tell-town; weep not in Weep-town; in the house of Dust, roll yourself in dust." 7. The Eleutheropolis or Beit-jibrin of Jerome. 8. Following the LXX: ἔν Ἀκείμ —Hebrew: "weep not at all" or Weep-town. Probably a town in the north from which the Canaanites were never expelled (*cf.* Judges 1:31). 9. South of Beit-jibrin, now a waddy: Elghufi. 10. "Beauty-town": modern Suafir on the Philistine plain c. four and one-half miles south east of Ashdod. 11. March-town: "Zenani" of Joshua 15:37. 12. Unknown—wailing incapacitates it to render help—no pun! 13. "Bitterness"—unknown. There is no good news! The future is dark!

- 13 Hitch the swift steed to the war-chariot, O inhabitress
of Lachish.¹ You have been the beginning sin to the
daughter of Zion; yea, in you are found the trans-
14 gressions of Israel. Therefore you should give departing
presents to Moresheth²-Gath; the houses of Achzib³ shall
15 be deception to the kings of Israel. Therefore the
conqueror shall overcome you, O inhabitress of Mare-
16 shah;⁴ the glory of Israel shall come to Adullum.⁵ Make
bald⁶ and shear yourself for your delicate children;
enlarge your baldness like the vulture,⁷ for they go into
exile from you.

1. "The swift steed": Tel-el-hesy. 2. Changing of one letter would mean: "the beloved" (*cf.* Deuteronomy 22:23)—Micah's beloved home town. The gift: bridal dower (*cf.* I Kings 9:16). The parting gift to the town implies that it is going far away from home into captivity. 3. Eight miles northeast of Beit-jibrin. The pun: "Achzib shall be Achzab" (a winter brook, which fails in the heat) from Jeremiah 15:18. 4. *Cf.* Joshua 15:44: name found in a ruin one mile south of Beit-jibrin: the word "possessor" is from the same root. 5. Six miles northeast of Beit-jibrin. 6. *Cf.* Isaiah 3:24; 22:12; Jeremiah 16:6; 41:6; Amos 8:10. 7. Or "eagle"—bald on the top of its head, with slight covering behind, found in Egypt and Palestine.

WOE UPON THE ARROGANT NOBLES

- 1¹ Woe to those who devise mischief and on their beds,
 plan evil!² As soon as the light of the morning comes,
 they practice it;³ for it is in the power of their hands.⁴
 2 They covet fields, then seize them, houses and take
 them away; also they crush a man and his household,
 3 a man and his heritage.⁵ Therefore⁶ thus says Yahweh:
 Look, I am devising calamity⁷ against this family⁸ from
 which you can neither withdraw your necks⁹ nor walk
 4 haughtily¹⁰ for it is a time of calamity!¹¹ In that day
 they shall lift a taunt-song¹² against you¹³ and wail out
 the wailing, It is finished! and say: We are utterly
 ruined! My people's estate He has altered! How He has
 removed (it) from Me! To the rebel He allots our
 fields.¹⁴

1. Vv. 1-2: a vivid description of the corrupt conduct of the aristocracy.
 2. Preparation of the ways and means of executing their evil schemes. 3. In
 the darkness of the night they lay their plans; in the morning they carry
 them out. 4. No one can prevent their crimes, for their wealth and power
 enable them to do as they please. They are a law unto themselves! (cf.
 Micah 7:3). 5. The hereditary portion of the land assigned to each family
 at the time of conquest and guarded by the "Jubilee Law" (cf. Numbers
 27:11; Leviticus 25:8ff; Deuteronomy 27:17). 6. Judgment because they
 conceive evil. 7. Cf. Amos 3:6: Yahweh will bring upon the people a
 calamity from which there is no escape. 8. Judah or the whole nation (cf.
 Amos 3:1). 9. Like a yoke that rests heavily upon the neck and cannot
 be shaken off. 10. A symbol of pride and arrogance. 11. Cf. Amos 5:13.
 12. Cf. Isaiah 14:4; Habakkuk 2:6. 13. By successful opponents. 14. Once
 in the settlement of the land, Yahweh divided the fields to His people (cf.
 Numbers 26:53, 55; Joshua 13:7; 14:5; 18:2, 5, 10; 19:51); but Micah depicts
 the division of the land to heathen conquerors.

REITERATION OF JUDGMENT

5 Therefore there shall be no one to cast the line by lot¹
6² in the congregation of Israel. Babble not—so they babble
7 —they shall not babble of such things!³ Disgrace will
never cease! O Thou who speaks thusly to the house
of Jacob, is the spirit of Yahweh impatient?⁴ Or are
these⁵ His actions? Shall not My words do good to him
8 who walks uprightly?⁶ Recently My people rose up as
an enemy; you strip off the robe⁷ from them who
9 pass quietly by, as men averse to warfare.⁸ The women⁹
of My people you tear away from their happy homes.¹⁰
From their children you take away My eternal¹¹ glory.

1. As in the delightful days of early conquest, when Joshua allocated the land to the several tribes (*cf.* Joshua 15:1; 16:1; 17:1; Judges 1:3). 2. The eternal cry of respectability: "Yahweh can do no harm to us! We are upright men! These are just normal business transactions!" 3. An attempt to stifle the pulpit! 4. Ceased to be longsuffering (*cf.* Exodus 34:6). 5. Calamities enumerated in v. 4. 6. Yahweh can send no message of judgment to those who serve Him faithfully. 7. "Salmah," or upper garment, which was thrown over the tunic by day and used as a covering by night. 8. They pounce upon their victims without excuse—as they pass by peaceably, attending to their own business, they fall upon them. 9. Widows who, being without defenders, fall easy prey to the greedy nobles; women are driven from their homes. 10. One suggested translation: "The women of My people you tear from their darling children"—doubtful. If scholars had full power to amend the text to their own whims, in a few generations the Bible would be completely rewritten. 11. Their glory was their citizenship in the nation of Yahweh. When they were sold as slaves, they were cut off from the nation, and thus they lost the privilege and glory due them (*cf.* Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 27:19; Isaiah 1:17 for special care for the fatherless and widows). The prophets blasted this inhumanity again and again (*cf.* Isaiah 1:23; 10:2).

- 10 Arise you¹ and depart,¹ for this is not your resting-place,² because of defilement which brings destruction
11 —destruction incurable.³ If one who walks in wind⁴ and falsehood⁴ lies by saying: I will prophesy to you of wine⁵ and strong drink,⁵ he shall even be the prophet of this people.

SALVATION OF A REMNANT⁶

- 12 I will surely assemble you, O Jacob, all of you,
I will without doubt gather the remnant⁷ of Israel.
I will place them like sheep of Bozrah.⁸
Like a flock in the midst of their fold.
They shall hum with men!⁹
13 The breach-breaker¹⁰ has gone up before them;
They have opened a breach, passed through the gate,
and have gone out by it.
And their king¹¹ has passed on before them with
Yahweh at their head.

1. The punishment will be "lex talionis." They have sold others into slavery, now they must suffer a similar fate. The chickens have come home to roost! 2. Though once given for that purpose (*cf.* Deuteronomy 12:9, 10; Isaiah 28:12), the land is now defiled by iniquity (*cf.* Leviticus 18:25). 3. A flashlight on the relation of sin and eternal death. 4. The irony of this statement is enhanced by the Hebrew word "ruach," which means both wind and spirit. The prophet who walks in "the spirit of falsehood" is the most terrible phenomenon of the religious life. In him the spirit of God becomes merely wind—he is a bag of wind! 5. Applicable to a modern state: drink interests not only dominate religion but offer a sordid support to religion. The union of liquor and the Bible was anticipated by Micah. A sordid nation rejects Yahweh's prophet and accepts a corrupt combination in its place. The modernness of the pre-exilic prophets is due to the unchangeable character of sin and the equally unchangeable character of the Lord God Almighty! 6. These verses assume that the people are in exile; they promise a return of the remnant under the head of a breaker! 7. The usual prophetic word for the survivors from a judgment (*cf.* Isaiah 10:20, 21). 8. In Edom (*cf.* Isaiah 34:6; Amos 1:12). Some scholars read: "Betzirah," cognate with Arabic "Sira"—a sheltering fold in which sheep are penned at night: "as sheep into a fold." 9. The swarming exiles gathering to their homes. 10. Modern bull-dozer: "Messiah." He breaks the prison bars of the captives (*cf.* Isaiah 43:6; 48:20; 52:11, 12; 61:1) and leads them out through the gate of the city of their captivity (*cf.* Nahum 3:13). 11. Yahweh (*cf.* Exodus 13:21; Isaiah 52:12; Jeremiah 31:8ff).

CORRUPTION OF CIVIL RULERS

- 1 Then I said: Listen now, O you chiefs of Jacob,¹ and
 you rulers of the house of Israel;¹ aren't you supposed
 2 to know justice?² You haters of good³ and you lovers
 of evil,⁴ who rip off their skin⁵ from them (the people)
 3 and their flesh from their bones, who devour the flesh
 of My people and flay their skin from off them; also
 they break their bones, and chop⁶ them into pieces,
 4 even for the pot, like flesh within the caldron! ⁷ At that
 time⁸ they shall cry to Yahweh and He will not answer
 them⁹—but He will hide His face¹⁰ from them at that
 time, because they have completely corrupted their
 actions.

1. Means Judah (*cf.* v. 10). 2. In view of the special privileges enjoyed by Israel (*cf.* Amos 2:11; Hosea 11:1-4; Isaiah 1:2), there is no excuse for ignorance of the principles of righteousness—especially among the leaders. 3. Wrongdoing has become their second nature (*cf.* Amos 2:10). 4. Their disposition has become utterly perverted so that they hate what they should love and *vice versa* (*cf.* Isaiah 1:16, 17). 5. Rulers are viewed as shepherds tearing and devouring the sheep they ought to pasture (*cf.* Ezekiel 34:2-10). 6. LXX: "break up bread." 7. Nobles were no longer farmers, like Saul and Nabal, but merchant princes, enriched by traffic with Phoenicia. Prices soared, a poor class developed, and the rich lived at the expense of the poor. 8. When the wheels of judgment begin to turn—mercy is past. 9. *Cf.* Psalm 18:41; Proverbs 21:3. 10. In anger (*cf.* Hosea 5:15; Deuteronomy 31:17; Psalm 44:24).

CONDEMNATION OF THE FALSE PROPHETS

- 5 Yahweh speaks thusly against the prophets who lead My people astray, who bite with their teeth¹ and declare peace; but the one who does not put (something) in their
6 mouths, they declare war² against him. Therefore night shall come upon you³ without a vision, darkness without divination, and the sun shall go down on the prophets
7 and the day shall be dark over them. Also the seers shall be ashamed and the diviners embarrassed; all of them shall cover their beards,⁴ because there is no answer from
8 God. But⁵ I—I am full of power⁶ by the Spirit of Yahweh, of justice⁷ and of might,⁸ to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin.⁹

1. More interested in the size of the bite which goes in their mouths than what comes out. If they are fed, they preach "peace" to their parishoners regardless of truth. If their remuneration cease, they denounce the innocent men who do not bribe them. 2. Declare holy war as if Yahweh decreed it—stemming only from private vengeance (*cf.* Jeremiah 6:4; Joel 3:9). 3. Punishment of the lustful leaders misled by the false prophets will be a day of darkness—not light (*cf.* Lamentation 2:9; Amos 5:18). 4. Or hair of the upper lip—a sign of mourning and silence (*cf.* Leviticus 13:45; Ezekiel 24:17, 22). 5. Micah is different: mark of a true prophet. He does not prophesy pleasant things, but boldly denounces the people's sins! 6. Authority, strength and courage to withstand popular clamor. 7. A keen, moral sense which enabled him to discern what is right and true—he does not call evil good or black white (*cf.* Isaiah 5:20). 8. Manliness, courage. 9. He remains unmoved by flattery or threat, by gain or loss; he stands firmly for right, fearlessly exposing sin.

ADDITIONAL CONDEMNATION OF NATION'S LEADERS

- 9 Listen to this now, O you chiefs of the house of Jacob
and you rulers of the house of Israel, who spurn justice
10 and pervert all that is equitable. Who build up¹ Zion²
11 with blood and Jerusalem³ with crime. Her chiefs judge
for a bribe and her priests⁴ teach for a reward and
her prophets divine for silver; yet they piously lean
upon Yahweh⁵ saying: Is not Yahweh in our midst?
Calamity cannot befall us!

DOOM OF JERUSALEM

- 12 Therefore because of you Zion⁶ shall be plowed as a
field⁷ and Jerusalem⁶ become heaps (of ruins) and the
mountain⁸ of the house as the high places⁸ of the forest.

1. Rich men increased their wealth by removing their Naboths (*cf.* Ezekiel 22:27). 2. The upper city, where the Temple stood. 3. The rest of the city. 4. Whose function was to teach the Torah (*cf.* Hosea 4:4ff; Malachi 2:7) and to render legal decisions in difficult cases. 5. In the face of moral depravity, rulers, priests and prophets claim the favor and protection of Yahweh. 6. Three distinct sections of the capital: (1) Zion, the ancient Jebusite stronghold, including the royal palaces; (2) Jerusalem, the city proper; and (3) The mountain of the house, the Temple area. 7. A visitor in the middle of the nineteenth century observed that one part of it supported a crop of barley, another was undergoing the labour of the plough. 8. Often places of irregular worship; but not the allusion here. It is generally thought of as a high hill, like Monte Testaccio in Rome, which marks ruins.

ZION, THE FUTURE RELIGIOUS CENTER OF THE WORLD

- 1 But in the sequel of the days¹ it shall come to pass that the mount of the house of Yahweh² shall be established at the head³ of the mountains and it shall be exalted
- 2 above the hills and all people shall flow⁴ to it. Many nations⁵ shall come and say: Come, let us go up to the mount of Yahweh and to the house of God of Jacob that He may teach us His ways⁶ and we will walk in His paths. For from Zion the Law⁷ shall go forth and
- 3^s the word of Yahweh from Jerusalem! Then He shall judge between⁹ many peoples, and mediate¹⁰ for strong nations far and wide; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks;¹¹ they shall not lift up, nation against nation, a sword,
- 4 neither shall they learn war any more!¹² But every man

1. Some indefinite future: phrase used by prophets in referring to the Messianic Age (*cf.* Deuteronomy 4:30; 31:29; Jeremiah 22:20; 30:24; 48:27; 49:39; Ezekiel 38:16; Daniel 2:28; 10:14; Hosea 3:5). 2. The Temple Mount (*cf.* Micah 3:12). 3. LXX: "tops." Zion will be at the head of the procession of mountains, towering above all others (*cf.* Psalm 68:16; 48:2; Zechariah 14:10; Joel 3:12). 4. Shall gravitate to it naturally—like rivers, *e.g.*, the Nile (*cf.* Jeremiah 31:22; 51:4). 5. Jerusalem, the spiritual metropolis of the world (*cf.* Isaiah 11:10; 60:3; Jeremiah 3:17; Zechariah 2:11; 8:22, 23). 6. The segments of His Commandments relative to our needs (*cf.* Psalm 94:12). 7. Verbal root means "to teach"—"teaching" or "instruction": instruction given to seekers from time to time out of which the Mosaic Law developed (*cf.* Deuteronomy 17:11). 8. When Yahweh is recognized as sovereign ruler of the world, an era of permanent peace will begin. 9. *Cf.* Isaiah 5:3. 10. This supreme court shall become the United Nations of the world. 11. Implements of war will be turned into implements of agriculture. Armament races will cease! 12. The dream of the ages will become a reality.

- shall sit under his vine and under his fig tree,¹ and no one shall make them afraid for the mouth of Yahweh
5 of Hosts has spoken.² For now all nations are walking each in the name of his god, but then we will walk in the name³ of Yahweh, our God forever and ever.⁴

RESTORATION OF THE DIASPORA

- 6 In that day,⁵ Oracle of Yahweh, I will gather the lame and the displaced; I will collect all that I have afflicted.
7 I will make the lame a remnant,⁶ and she who was cast off into a strong people;⁷ and Yahweh shall reign⁸ over them in the mount of Zion from now and even forever.
8 But you, O Tower⁹ of the flock, Hill of the daughter of Zion,¹⁰ to you shall come the former¹¹ rule and the kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.

1. First of the Four Freedoms—the Palestinian image for peace, corresponding to our sitting by the hearth, is basking under the vine and fig (*cf.* I Kings 4:25; II Kings 18:31; Zechariah 3:10). 2. The dream of peace and rest for the world, can only result from a revelation or teaching from Yahweh. 3. The "name" of God is that side of His nature which can be revealed to man. To walk in His name means to live in mystic union with God as He has revealed Himself, and under His protection (*cf.* Amos 2:7). 4. This will not be broken again (*cf.* Hosea 2:19, 20). 5. In the Messianic age (*cf.* v. 1). 6. The nucleus of a new kingdom of God (*cf.* Amos 5:15), around which all of the Messianic hopes center. 7. In the Providence of God the insignificant remnant will develop into a strong and powerful nation. 8. In the past, incompetent leaders or rulers were responsible for the nation's plight—now Yahweh takes over. 9. Not an allusion to a tower near Beth-lehem (*cf.* Genesis 35:21), nor to a tower of the king's castle (*cf.* Nehemiah 3:25), but denoting Jerusalem herself. Now a flourishing city, she soon will be destroyed and upon her ruins a watchtower will be erected—similar to those built for the protection of the flocks roaming on the desert (*cf.* II Chronicles 26:10). 10. Also denoting Jerusalem: "Ophel" is the name of the southeast spur, bounded on the east by the Kidron, on the west by the Tyropoeon Valley. 11. "First"—the prestige enjoyed during the most flourishing period of Hebrew history, under David and Solomon, will be restored to Jerusalem during the Messianic era.

DISTRESS AND SUBSEQUENT DELIVERANCE

- 9 Now, why are you crying so loudly?¹ Is there no king in you?² Or has your counsellor² perished? Why have pangs seized³ you like a woman in the agony of childbirth?⁴ Tremble and writhe,⁴ O daughter of Zion, like one in childbirth, for now you must go forth from the city and encamp in the field and come even to Babylon;⁵ but there you will be rescued;⁶ there will Yahweh liberate you from the hand of your enemies.

DELIVERANCE OF ZION

- 11 Now,⁷ also there shall be gathered against you many nations,⁸ who say: Let her be defiled⁹ in order that our eyes may gaze on Zion!¹⁰ But they know not¹¹ the

1. Cf. Isaiah 22:2, 5: "The daughter of Zion" (*cf.* v. 10) is addressed—Jerusalem and her inhabitants. The capital is filled with lamentation over the present or rapidly approaching judgment. 2. Implying that people were seeking foreign aid (*cf.* Isaiah 19:11; 36:5). 3. Cf. Jeremiah 6:24; 22:23; Hosea 13:13. 4. "Labor to bring forth"; in Job 40:23: "break out" or "swell" like water; Judges 20:33: "break out" of an ambush; in Ezekiel 32:2, of a lion from the reeds. 5. Cf. Hosea 2:16-20 in thought. 6. A rich evangelic promise. 7. Present condition in contrast with the future glory. 8. The Assyrians, whose armies were composed of soldiers from many vassal states (*cf.* Isaiah 10:8). 9. Heathen armies would defile the city (*cf.* Psalm 106:38; Isaiah 24:5). 10. Cf. Obadiah 12-14. 11. Cf. Isaiah 55:8.

thoughts of Yahweh nor do they understand His counsel,
13 for He will gather them as sheaves¹ on the floor. Arise²
and thresh,³ O daughter of Zion, for I will make your
horn as iron⁴ and your hoofs as brass⁵ and you shall
crush many nations; and I will dedicate⁶ their spoil to
Yahweh and their wealth to the Lord of all the earth.

1. Cruel treatment of a conquered foe is often likened to the threshing of sheaves (*cf.* Amos 1:3; II Samuel 12:31). 2. An exhortation to Zion to execute judgment upon her arrogant enemies. 3. Inhabitants of Zion are likened to animals who tread out the grain with their hoofs (*cf.* Amos 1:3; Hosea 10:11; Deuteronomy 25:4). 4. Powerful horns will pierce and cut down the foe (*cf.* Deuteronomy 33:17). 5. The harder the hoofs the more effective the treading. 6. Israel is not to enrich herself by plundering the defeated foe. All the possessions will be consecrated to Yahweh's use (*cf.* Leviticus 27:28; I Samuel 15:21; I Kings 20:42).

- 1¹ Now assemble yourself in troops,² O daughter of troops,² for a siege has been laid against us; with a rod³ they will smite on the cheek⁴ the judge³ of Israel.

MESSIAH'S BIRTH AND RULE

- 2 But You, Beth-lehem Ephrathah,⁵ smallest among the thousands⁶ of Judah, out of You to Me⁷ shall come forth the Ruler⁸ to be in Israel, whose going forth¹⁰ 3⁹ are from old, from everlasting.¹¹ Therefore He will give them up,¹² till the time that the one who travails has brought forth; then the remnant¹³ of His brethren¹⁴ shall return with the children of Israel.

1. 4:14 in Hebrew. The verse actually stands by itself: a third picture of Jerusalem in siege. 2. A play on words. At one time, Jerusalem was full of marauding bands—full of robberies. Now she is "gathered in troops" ready for destruction (*cf.* II Chronicles 25:12). 3. Another play on words. 4. A gross insult (*cf.* Job 16:10; I Kings 22:24). 5. Beth-lehem in the district of Ephrathah (*cf.* Joshua 15:59; I Samuel 17:12; Ruth 1:2). Some scholars think that "Beth-lehem" is a later insertion. 6. Smallest form of district—*cf.* English: "hundreds"—Gideon belonged to the poorest "thousand" in Manasseh (*cf.* Judges 6:15). 7. Or "for Me," Yahweh the speaker. 8. *Cf.* Micah 4:8. 9. A commentary on a young maiden bringing forth her son (*cf.* Isaiah 7:14) and the return of the remnant (*cf.* Isaiah 11:12). 10. Plural: probable reference to Davidic origin. Messiah conceived of as a David re-divinus (*cf.* Ezekiel 34:23; 37:24; Hosea 3:5). 11. With this additional phrase a deeper tone is given to the prophecy—shows the Messiah will not only be David restored, but One who was in the beginning with Yahweh. 12. Yahweh will deliver Israel into the hands of its foes. 13. Those who survive the judgment. 14. Messiah's (*cf.* Isaiah 11:12; Hosea 3:5 for: "the remnant shall return").

- 4 He shall stand¹ and shepherd His flock in the strength of Yahweh, in the majesty² of the name of Yahweh His God and they shall remain.³ For now⁴ He shall be great to the ends of the earth.⁵

THE ASSYRIAN SUPREMACY

- 5 This one shall be our peace;⁶ when the Assyrian⁷ comes into our land and when he marches on our borders,⁸ we will raise against him seven⁹ shepherds and eight⁹ princes of men. They shall spoil¹⁰ the land of Assyria with the sword and the land of Nimrod¹¹ with her own naked swords. He shall deliver us from Assyria, when He comes into our land and marches within our borders.

1. Messiah (*cf.* Isaiah 41:5 for the Shepherd's standing). 2. *Cf.* Isaiah 30:37 and the Good Shepherd in the Gospel of John 10:11, 12. 3. Equivalent to "shall abide in peace and safety"—no one can harm them (*cf.* Hosea 2:18; Isaiah 9:7; 11:6-9). 4. Refers to the time the Shepherd will exercise His shepherding care. 5. *Cf.* Psalm 2:8; 72:8: Messiah's kingdom will be far greater than the Assyrian. 6. Some scholars connect this clause with v. 4—a pregnant and blissful word that the Messiah will spread peace over the world. 7. Defeat is promised in Micah 4:12, 13. But a leader would deliver Judah from the impending Assyrian invasion. 8. LXX reading; Hebrew: "palaces." 9. An abundance of leaders: "seven" signifies perfect number, "eight" added to show an abundance of leaders. 10. Literally: "feed off." These leaders are thought of as shepherds who shepherd the enemy's territory with a sword instead of a crook (*cf.* Jeremiah 6:3; Ezekiel 34:18). 11. Babylon (*cf.* Genesis 10:9ff). But, as Genesis 10:11 reveals, it includes Assyria.

RESTORED ISRAEL'S ATTITUDE TOWARD THE GENTILES

- 7 The remnant¹ of Jacob shall be among many peoples like the dew² from Yahweh, like showers² upon grass; which do not wait³ for man, nor tarry³ for the sons of
8 men. The remnant of Jacob shall dwell among the nations, among many peoples, as a lion⁴ among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep; who, as he goes through, treads down and
9 tears in pieces, and there is none to deliver.⁵ Let your hand be lifted up⁶ above all your adversaries and all your enemies be annihilated!

YAHWEH'S BLESSINGS UPON THE REDEEMED REMNANT:

First: Passing Away of Human Defenses

- 10 It shall come to pass in that day,⁷ Oracle of Yahweh, that I will cut off your horses⁸ from your midst and
11 I will destroy your war chariots.⁹ Also I will cut off the cities of your land and overthrow all your fortresses.⁹

1. Cf. Micah 4:7; Isaiah 10:21. 2. The "tertium comparationis" is not "the mysterious origin of the dew and rain" or "the countless number of the dewdrops," but the *refreshing vitalizing power*. 3. Falling of the rain and the dew is neither assisted nor hindered by man—processes of nature go on even as man slumbers. 4. Yahweh Himself is compared to a lion in Amos 3:8. The severity of the divine nature, mingled with tenderness (cf. Revelation 5:5; 6:16), will be reproduced in Yahweh's people. 5. No earthly power can successfully resist the power of the remnant. 6. In contrast to hanging down in weakness and ineffectiveness (cf. Exodus 14:8; Deuteronomy 32:27; Isaiah 26:11). 7. Day of triumph pictured in vv. 8, 9. 8. Used in war (cf. Deuteronomy 17:16; 20:1; Isaiah 2:7; 30:16; 30:1-5; Zechariah 9:10). The wonderful experiences of the people will convince them that Yahweh is their real helper—not chariot and horses (cf. Isaiah 2:7; 30:16; 31:1). 9. All human defenses may be destroyed (cf. Hosea 8:14; Isaiah 9:4ff; 11:1ff; Ezekiel 38:11). Should any foreign nation attack the people of Yahweh, He Himself will smite them.

Second: Removal of Witchcrafts and Soothsayers

- 12 I will destroy sorcery out of your hand¹ and you shall have no more soothsayers.²

Third: Extermination of Idolatry

- 13 Your graven images³ also I will cut off and your statues⁴ from your midst, and you shall not worship any more
14 the works of your hands. I will uproot your groves from your midst and I will annihilate your idols.⁵

Fourth: Threat of Vengeance

- 15 So will I execute, in My wrath and My anger, vengeance⁶ upon the nations who do not obey (Me).

1. Obviously some divining objects, rods or crystals, held in the hand.
2. Or "diviners of the clouds," studied in Chaldea for the purpose of divination (cf. Isaiah 2:6; 8:9). 3. Images made of stone (cf. Micah 1:7) or wood (cf. Deuteronomy 7:5) or images to deity in general (cf. Isaiah 43:8). The Old Testament prophets possessed intense hostility toward these images (cf. Hosea 8:5, 6; 10:5; Deuteronomy 7:5, *et al.*). 4. Standing images—word used almost exclusively of a "pillar" connected with the religious cult. The "Mazzeboth" and the wooden figures of the goddess Asherah, the Assyrian Ishtar, called Asherim—parts of the ancient cultus of Palestine—could have been admitted, from old custom, until the Josianic Reformation in 621 B.C. 5. Some scholars read: 'Atzabbeika, "images" (cf. II Chronicles 24:8). 6. Cf. Joel 2:18: Yahweh's resentment has been aroused over the nations' hostile attitude toward His people, who are the "apple of His eye."

YAHWEH'S COMPLAINT: REASONABLENESS OF TRUE RELIGION

- 1 Listen¹ now to what Yahweh is saying: Arise, complain² before the mountains and let the hills³ hear your voice!
- 2 Hear, O mountains,³ Yahweh's complaint and you, the enduring foundations⁴ of the earth! For Yahweh has a controversy with His⁵ people and with Israel He
- 3 comes to argue. O My people,⁶ what have I done to you?⁷ How have I wearied you?⁷ Testify against Me!
- 4 For I brought you up from the land of Egypt, and from the house of slavery⁸ I delivered you. I sent before you⁹
- 5 Moses,¹⁰ Aaron¹¹ and Miriam.¹² O My people, remember now what Balak,¹³ king of Moab, purposed and what Balaam, the son of Beor, answered him;¹⁴ (recall) from Shittim¹⁵ to Gilgal¹⁵ that you may know the

1. Prophet speaks to the accused people. 2. Prophet acts as the go-between. He summons the criminals to appear in court, hear the indictment and plead their case. 3. Trials are conducted in the theatre of nature—the abiding witnesses of all passing events from age to age. 4. They have endured from the ages (*cf.* Jonah 2:6). 5. His creation and redemption (*cf.* Isaiah 3:13-15; Amos 3:12). 6. Yahweh speaks—bristles with pathos and emotion. In spite of their ingratitude, He recognizes them as His own. 7. He had never taken advantage of them, nor made excessive demands, but He had showered upon them blessings without number. 8. An expression frequently applied to Egypt (*cf.* Exodus 13:13ff; Deuteronomy 5:6; Jeremiah 34:13). 9. As leaders. 10. The prophet to whom Yahweh spoke face to face (*cf.* Numbers 12:8). 11. The spokesman of Moses, and also a mediator between Yahweh and His people (*cf.* Exodus 4:16). 12. The "Big Three"—sister of the two, and leader of the triumphal dance after the crossing of the Red Sea (*cf.* Exodus 15:20). 13. *Cf.* Numbers 22-24: frustration of Balak's plan to cut off Israel. 14. Yahweh turned curses into blessings. 15. The last station of the Israelites east of the Jordan, first stopping place in Canaan. The most important event was the crossing of the Jordan.

- 6 righteous actions of Yahweh. How shall I¹ come before Yahweh? Shall I prostrate myself² before God the Most High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-
7 offerings,³ with calves a year old?³ Will Yahweh be pleased with thousands⁴ of rams, or with ten thousands⁴ of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn⁵ for my transgression, or the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
8⁶ He has shown you,⁷ O man, what is good;⁸ what does Yahweh require of you, but to do justly,⁹ to love mercy¹⁰ and to walk humbly¹¹ with your God.¹²

1. Israel speaks: her defense is popular religion—ritualism and ceremony. 2. Implies deep reverence (*cf.* Isaiah 33:5; 57:5). The idea of Yahweh being high and removed from the people because of their sins is recorded in Hosea 5:15; Isaiah 18:4. 3. Two closely connected expressions. Burnt offerings consisting of calves a year old. Calves a year old were commonly used for sacrificial purposes, though younger calves might be used (*cf.* Leviticus 9:3). 4. Signifying great unlimited numbers. If the ordinary offerings were not sufficient, they were ready to present extraordinary gifts. 5. Human sacrifice was practiced among Israel's neighbors (*cf.* II Kings 3:27). 6. The greatest verse in the Old Testament—a definition of spiritual or prophetic religion. 7. Through Moses, the prophets, the Nazarites and other teachers (*cf.* Amos 2:11). 8. A holy and righteous God can take pleasure only in that which is good, and this He requires of His people. 9. Live in accordance to the principles of righteousness and equity (*cf.* Amos 5:7; 5:24). Amos taught this. 10. Practice diligently the principles of kindness and brotherly kindness (*cf.* Hosea 2:19; 6:6; 8:13). Hosea added this. 11. Micah's contribution: the word is used once again in Proverbs 11:2. Root meaning "in secret," or "secretly"; cognate Aramaic word: "to be hidden"—one who lives noiselessly, humbly, piously or unostentatiously. In the feminine it refers to a bride who is modest, chaste and pure. Hence a kind of inward and secret submission to God which exemplifies the "Imitatio Christe." (*Cf.* Deuteronomy 10:12, 13). 12. A classic eighth century statement of the contrast between popular and prophetic religion—only one other statement in the New Testament that excels it (Matthew 11:28-30).

CORRUPTION OF ISRAEL'S EVERYDAY BUSINESS LIFE

- 9 The voice of Yahweh cries to the city! 'Tis wisdom
to revere Thy name!¹ Hear you the rod² and Who
10 appointed it.³ Are there yet in the house of the wicked
treasures of wickedness and the scant measure⁴ (that is)
11 detestable? Can I count her pure⁵ with the wicked
12 balances,⁵ and with the bag of false weights?⁶ Whose
rich men are full of violence,⁷ and her inhabitants speak
lies⁸ and their tongue is deceitful⁹ in their mouth.

PRONOUNCEMENT OF JUDGMENT

- 13 But I, on My part, will make you sick, smiting you,¹⁰
14 and desolate (you) because of your sins. You shall eat
and not be satisfied and your own famine¹¹ shall be
in your midst; you shall attempt to flee,¹² but you
shall not escape and what you deliver I will give to
15 the sword. You shall sow, but not reap; you shall
tread the olives, but not anoint yourself with oil, and
16 sweet wine, but not drink wine.¹³ For the statutes of

1. Literally: "wisdom will see Thy name." 2. Judgment is about to fall.
3. Voice of Him who has ordained judgment. 4. Literally: "ephah of
leanness." They cheat the buyer by using small measures (*cf.* Amos 8:5;
Hosea 3:2; Deuteronomy 24:14, 15). 5. Hebrew: "Shall I be pure"—supported
by the Vulgate, but an impossible rendering. LXX: Yahweh is the speaker:
"Can it (she: Jerusalem) be pure?" 6. No one who practices fraud or
deceit can expect to be acquitted in the court of Yahweh. 7. *Cf.* Micah
2:1, 2, 8; 3:2, 3, 9. 8. Toward Yahweh and man. 9. *Noun used in place
of the adjective for emphasis.* 10. An incurable wound (*cf.* Nahum 3:19).
11. Maybe better: "emptiness" (*cf.* Leviticus 26:25, 26; Deuteronomy 28:39).
12. A besieged and starving town (*cf.* Leviticus 26:26; II Kings 6:25; Jeremiah
52:6). 13. The enemy takes Judah's harvest (*cf.* Amos 5:11; Leviticus 26:16;
Deuteronomy 28:30, 38, 41).

Omri¹ are kept and all the customs of the house of Ahab,² and you walk in their principles only that I may give you to ruin and her inhabitants for scorn.³ Therefore the reproaches of My people you shall bear.⁴

1. The worship of Baal (*cf.* I Kings 16:31f.). Omri (885-874 B.C.), the father of Ahab and founder of a powerful dynasty, referred to in Assyrian inscriptions; LXX as "Zimri." 2. Only two kings of the Northern Kingdom mentioned in the prophetic books. 3. Or "hissing"—an object of derision (*cf.* Jeremiah 25:18; 51:37). 4. When the heathen triumphs over them.

HOPELESSNESS OF ISRAEL'S CONDITION

- 1 Woe¹ is me! For I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings² of the vintage—not a cluster to eat. My soul craves the first ripe fig.³
- 2 The godly⁴ man is perished out of the land and there is no upright⁵ one among men. All of them lurk for blood;⁶ they pursue every man his brother⁷ with a net.⁸
- 3 Their hands are set for evil⁹ to do it thoroughly; the prince¹⁰ makes a request and the judge¹¹ judges for a reward—even the great man¹² speaks in his lust of his
- 4 soul—thus they weave it together.¹³ The best of them is like a brier;¹⁴ the most upright (is sharper) than a prickly hedge. The day of your watchman¹⁵ and your punishment rolls on;¹⁶ now their confusion has¹⁷ come!
- 5 Trust not any friend!¹⁸ Confide in no confidant!¹⁸ Guard the doors of your mouth from her who lies in your bosom.¹⁸

1. The Hebrew word appears only in Job 10:15 and here. 2. He was seeking a good cluster of grapes. 3. The first figs to ripen in June are sweeter than any others (*cf.* Isaiah 28:4; Jeremiah 24:2; Hosea 9:10). 4. "Chasid"—merciful, loyal, pious (*cf.* Proverbs 11:17). 5. All have become crooked and corrupt. 6. Anxiously looking for opportunities to commit robbery and violence. 7. "Fellow citizen" or "neighbor." 8. All instincts of love and sympathy are quenched. Men continually scheme to undo their fellow-man. 9. Selfishness rules everywhere. 10. *Cf.* Hosea 3:4. 11. One occupying a judicial position. 12. The man of wealth, power and influence. 13. The three enumerated classes conspire together to carry out their evil schemes (*cf.* I Kings 21:13)—the unholy triumvirate! 14. Pricks, hurts and injuries. 15. The prophets (*cf.* Jeremiah 6:17; Isaiah 21:6; Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7; Habakkuk 2:1). 16. A prophetic perfect. 17. Judgment will produce consternation (*cf.* Isaiah 22:5). 18. A climax: the closest ties of blood-relationship are trodden under foot, and all bonds of reverence, love and chastity are loosed!

- 6 For the son dishonors¹ the father, daughter rebels against her mother, daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; the enemies of a man are the men² in his own house.

ASSURANCE OF FINAL DELIVERANCE OF THE PENITENT

- 7 But as for me, I will look (expectantly) to³ Yahweh; I will wait⁴ for the God of my salvation.⁵ My God will
8 hear⁶ me! Rejoice not,⁷ O my enemy,⁸ at me; if I fall, I will arise; if I sit in the darkness,⁹ Yahweh will be
9 a light¹⁰ to me. The anger of Yahweh I will bear¹¹ until He recognizes my complaint and executes my justice, for I have sinned against Him. He will bring me forth to the light¹² and I will see His righteousness.¹³
10 Thus my enemy shall see and shame shall cover her¹⁴ the one who said to me: Where is Yahweh your God?¹⁵ My eyes shall see her; now she shall be trampled, like mire in the streets!¹⁶

1. Literally: "treats as a fool" (*cf.* Deuteronomy 32:15). 2. Not the above mentioned, but others who formed a portion of a Hebrew household, the servants (*cf.* Genesis 39:19; II Samuel 12:17, 18). 3. Or "look for" (*cf.* Psalm 27:8; Isaiah 17:10). 4. Wait for Yahweh and His mercies (*cf.* Psalm 42:6, 12; 43:5; 130:5). 5. He alone can deliver (*cf.* Psalm 48:46; Habakkuk 3:18; Isaiah 17:10). 6. Confident, radiant faith. 7. Your triumph will be only temporary. 8. A feminine collective noun: Babylon (*cf.* Psalm 35:19, 24; 38:16; Obadiah 12). 9. Another figure of calamity (*cf.* Amos 5:18; Isaiah 9:1; 42:7; 60:1). 10. The light is Yahweh's promise (*cf.* Psalm 37:1): "There is a bud of morning in midnight" (Keats). 11. Because I deserve it (*cf.* I Samuel 3:18; II Samuel 16:10; Lamentations 3:29). 12. Of prosperity and felicity. 13. Vindication—when Yahweh enters a covenant, He is honor bound to fulfill it. 14. *Cf.* Obadiah 10; Ezekiel 7:18. 15. A familiar gibe (*cf.* Psalm 78:10; 115:2; Joel 2:17). 16. *Cf.* Isaiah 10:6.

PROMISE OF A GLORIOUS RESTORATION

- 11 A day for building your wall!¹ In that day shall the
12 decree² be far removed. In that day they shall come
to you from Assyria and the fortified cities, and from
the fortress even to the river and from sea to sea and
13 from mountain to mountain. Nevertheless the land shall
be waste because of its populace, as the result of their
doings.

PRAYER OF THE PEOPLE

- 14 Rule³ your people with My staff,⁴ the sheep of My
heritage who dwell solitarily in the forest in the middle
of Carmel.⁵ Let them pasture in Bashan⁶ and Gilead⁶
15 as in the days of old!⁷ As in the days of your coming
forth out of the land of Egypt, I will show them
16 miracles!⁸ Nations shall see and be confounded over
all their might.⁹ They shall put their hands to their
17 mouth,¹⁰ and their ears shall be deafened.¹¹ They shall
lick the dust¹² like serpents,¹³ like worms of the ground
crawling from their holes.¹⁴ To Yahweh our God they
shall come trembling, and shall fear because of Thee!

1. The breaking down of walls is threatened. But they will be rebuilt in the day of restoration. 2. Ambiguous: some translate: "border"; hence: "a day for building your walls is that day; your border shall be broader that day" (*cf.* Isaiah 33:17). 3. *Cf.* Genesis 49:24; Psalm 23:1; 80:1. 4. *Cf.* Leviticus 27:32; Psalm 23:4. 5. "A fruitful field" (*cf.* II Kings 19:23; Isaiah 37:24). 6. Districts east of Jordan renowned for their rich pastures (*cf.* Amos 1:3; 4:1; Numbers 32:1ff). 7. Indefinite expression referring to previous prosperity. 8. *Cf.* Exodus 3:20: term applies to the plagues. 9. Helpless as in the presence of Almighty God (*cf.* Hosea 4:19). 10. *Cf.* Judges 18:19; Job 21:5. 11. *Cf.* Job 26:14; Isaiah 33:3: "from the thunder of His mighty acts." 12. A sign of submission (*cf.* Isaiah 49:23). 13. *Cf.* Genesis 3:14. 14. A picture of abject fear (*cf.* Psalm 18:45).

DOXOLOGY

- 18 Who is a God like to Thee?¹ One who forgives iniquity²
and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His
heritage. He does not keep forever His anger because
19 He delights in mercy.³ He will return and have com-
passion on us;⁴ He will tread under foot our iniquities.⁵
Yea, Thou wilt cast into the depth of the sea all our
20 sins.⁶ Thou wilt manifest faithfulness⁷ to Jacob⁸ and
mercy to Abraham,⁸ which Thou didst swear to our
fathers from the days of old.⁹

1. Question is a play on the name of Micah: "Who is like Yahweh?"
2. Cf. Exodus 34:7: "forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin." 3. He is
God and not man. He delights to give man another chance. 4. He cannot
cast off forever His children. 5. He will trample on sin as an enemy.
6. Never to be raised again—may allude to Pharoah's army (cf. Exodus
15:5, 10). 7. Complete confidence that Yahweh will deal with His people
according to His ancient promise to the fathers. 8. Two names applied to
the nation because to these two ancient worthies were given the most precious
promises (cf. Genesis 22:16-18; 35:9ff.). 9. Pointing to the patriarchal age
when the promise was first given, also to the subsequent repetitions of the
promise.